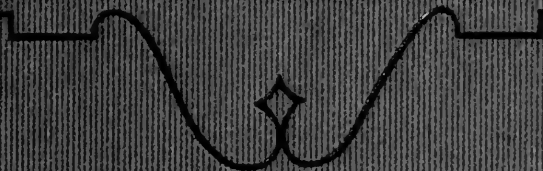




GERTRUDE CAPEN WHITNEY





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Gertrude Capson Whitney
(Mrs George Erastus)

9459 Reed Street Augusta
Georgia

November 1940

The House of Landell

OR

Follow and Find

BY
GERTRUDE CAPEN WHITNEY
(MRS. GEORGE ERASTUS WHITNEY)

Author of "Yet Speaketh He," "Roses from my Garden," "Above the
Shame of Circumstance" "I Choose"



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The House of Landell

CHAPTER I.

Life is a constant readjustment.

THE sound of two sharp whistles pursued Agnes Landell down the quiet country road; then came quick footsteps, and Tom Landell swung naturally into the rhythm of his sister's pace.

"Here is a lark," he exclaimed, "with a song of far-reaching mystery warbling between its wings," and he fluttered the covers of a book he held.

"You enthusiastic goose!" Curiously, Agnes eyed the little volume, while, with the ease of an accomplished pedestrian, she walked beside him.

"Goose me not! Enthusiasm is a law of nature, kin to that of self-preservation. Besides,—'thereby hangs a tale.' This flew to my hand to-day, by mistake, on the wings of an order to a New York antiquary."

Agnes scanned the title.

"Lark! Call it, rather, a little brown sparrow, to be found by the score. There are at least three in the garret."

"Its feathers,—rather, its board backs, do not betray its secret, neither does its name, Genung's Rhetoric. Oh, let me fly down from my perch of hyperbole and descend to facts."

With exaggerated care he turned the pages, disclosing a spray of pressed flowers.

"Not that it's so wonderful," touching it delicately, "but don't you suppose this is the name of the girl who did it?"

He read aloud, "Mattee Sue Romaine, Colonial Street, Gustaga, Georgia. Jupiter, Agnes, I'll write her!"

"It's the yellow jessamine," exclaimed Agnes. "Of course, I should write!"

"Think she'll answer the letter?"

"Possibly,—or laugh, and put it on the altar of her dreams,—mayhap the fire!"

"You believe no such thing! Anyway, I shall venture!"

"It is an old book. By this time, Mattee Sue Romaine may be a crochetty—"

"I refuse to believe it. Its owner never could lose her fascination, but would attain to more as years drop treasures into her dainty palm. We do not receive our names haphazard. We accrete them, so to speak. I know she is a lovely girl with bronze hair and sea-green eyes,—clever, too, these margins testify. I love people who dog-ear and pencil their books. They dare to be Daniels!" and he read aloud aphorisms, skipping from page to page.

"They sound as if begun by one person and continued by another. Is the writing the same?"

"I can't quite tell. There is a peculiar dash once in a while, as if some one else had caught up the thought, or it may be a composite of individual progression, not fully mulsified—to speak as if life were mayonnaise."

"Beware of adoring a composite mentality as you did a composite photograph a while ago, when you declared no one woman could be so beautiful as the mechanical adjustment, by the photographer, of the selected charms of many women."

"I've grown since then! Jupiter, won't you give me credit for a legitimate change of mind?"

"Indeed yes. She is practical as well as piquant. Read this parody." The brother and sister, heads together, scanned the pages.

"After I have written I shall read every one. Now, having planned, prepare to execute!" and Tom strode off.

"Tom is always having such interesting, worthwhile experiences," Agnes mused, as she strolled on. "Oh, if I live a thousand years and see a thousand climes, I shall never cease to love this wonderful spot with its ever varying panorama and woodland incense!"

With sudden swerve to the trend of her thought, she paused to watch the scene, her radiant face reflecting the life and beauty about her. She seemed a forest spirit, as, with head uplifted, listening to histories of the past, the present and the future, with rapt intentness seeing visions separating her from human kind, her soul seemed to reach out to and become a part of every tree and cloud and cap of wave throbbing with life about her. Between the foliage, along the roadside, flashing like a mass of silver, the water lay, alternately lifted and let fall in showers of many pointed stars. These twinkled and scintillated on the crescent waves, and golden sunbeams sparkled down to touch the diamond tips, only to be caught and held. The ærial pathway from the water to the horizon in the west seemed one radiant loom. Threads of sunlight rayed and sprayed from their spinning-wheel of gold, to meet in warp and woof of the garment they were weaving for the watcher, as nature draped it softly over her. Tossing its shuttle to and fro, the luminous atmosphere wove delicate veils of mist, trailing these lightly over the sombre, rugged hills beyond.

"Heigh-o, Heigh-o!" came in excited screams from the hill behind her, on the top of which stood the Beneby House. "Get out of the way! Get out of the way!"

Agnes turned hastily, to see a big touring car speeding zigzag down the hill, its wavering course laying claim to the whole roadway. With a leap she landed in the water, and stood, somewhat startled, at the danger she had escaped, of being knocked down by the reckless driver, who unconcernedly brought the car to a standstill.

"Grace Herrick! What are you doing!" Merrily she clambered up the bank, shaking the water from her skirts.

"It won't hurt you a bit. You are all in tub clothes and need variety. Blame Ross Mevin! I asked him to steer this new car of mine down hill, but he was too busy hurrying to catch up with you. Here he comes now with Mrs. Lavelle. Heigh-o, Mr. Mevin, I'll go into the town, next, to show the natives what summer tourists are good for. They are far better educators than universities. A crazy tourist at the wheel of a motor car can make a countryman run faster than a college football coach and a horse dance far better than a fancy trainer. Good-bye. I'm glad I wet you all up, Agnes, it'll give you a change of clothes and of,—oh, everything in general."

Grace moved off down the street, laughing, while Agnes waited for Mrs. Lavelle and Mr. Mevin.

"We are on the way to your house," said Mrs. Lavelle, as the three greeted and walked on down the pleasant lake road, leaving behind them Pine Hill, where, embowered in evergreens, stood the hotel from which Grace Herrick had motored and Mrs. Lavelle and Mr. Mevin started on their walk to the Landells'.

The house was not far from the lake and, from an eminence, overlooked it in all its scenic charm.

"Grace always leaves a whirlwind behind her, mentally and physically," laughed Mrs. Lavelle. "This escapade started in her determination to prove the civilizing effects of the summer tourist upon the country native."

"I declared they had none, Miss Landell," said Ross Mevin. "Tell me, what possible civilizing effects can there be in flocks of entities and nonentities so hybrid as tourists? Do they contribute anything more valuable than strange fashions of coiffing to the tree tops!"

"Yes, crazy demonstrations of recklessness such as she exhibits. After all," wringing her heavy skirts again, "summer and winter tourists are a Mahomet coming to the mountain. I think, all in all, it is usually to the advantage of the stationary mountain. The giant, sleeping in the brain and brawn of isolated sections, does not realize his strength until his first dull, perhaps supercilious, inspection of the intruder's methods, together with a growing pique at differences to the advantage of the newcomer, rouse him to the knowledge that the simple addition of a coat brush, a clean collar and a clear-cut expression, may assist a man of lesser calibre to outrun him in the race."

"In short, he learns that clean windows better display his wares!" Mevin paused under a white-heart cherry tree at the entrance of the Landells' orchard, to regale his companions and himself with fruit.

"That is true," said Agnes. "Then comes the nobler unfoldment,—the uncoiling of the thinking faculties through the interchange of ideas; the softening of sectional prejudices and a stronger grasp on life's larger issues."

"You put us on exalted pedestals,—us Romanys who wander from India to Baffin Bay, thermometer

and weather statistics in hand that we may be kept at proper temperature for forcing. It is a pity the average country—and city—clergyman does not imbibe this liquid brain food, as he seems to mold public opinion."

Mevin spoke lazily, less from interest than from desire to watch the quickening thought announce itself through Agnes' sparkling eyes, her flushing cheeks, her alertness of movement, flashing through her and rousing her to tense activity.

"An appropriate comment,—her brother's,—that she accompanies her thinking with a pyrotechnic display," and Mevin watched her analytically. "What a beauty it makes of her. How would it feel to be keyed to that pitch all the time! Could a fellow stand it or would he snap with the strain! Is anything on earth worth so much enthusiasm, I wonder!"

With effort he focussed his attention on her reply, so distracted was it by the inherent charm of the woman.

"Does it begin with them?" she was saying, intensely. "On the contrary, my observation leads me to believe that, with notable exceptions, the clergy are crystallized expressions of the public calibre."

"Heaven help the public!" Mevin groaned, ironically.

"It needs help. Until the public rises superior to statements of ignorant pulpit incumbents, such will present error. We laymen must burst the bonds of ignorance and struggle toward the liberty of God."

As she spoke, she seemed another being from the merry sister so interested in her brother's incipient romance. She was enfolded in an atmosphere of finer forces.

Mevin watched the change, perplexed and disturbed. He saw that her gaze did not include him, and realized, suddenly, that neither time nor space so effectually

could part them, as this impenetrable vestment which enveloped her.

"What did it mean," he thought wrathfully, "that she should receive him on the pleasant cherry-bibbing plane and shut him completely from this other phase!"

To compel her attention, he spoke irrelevantly. She did not reply. Determined to unravel the mystery he was still. Barred from realms of reality he felt she was entering, an unutterable longing to *see* with her, possessed him. As he waited for response, the stillness deepened within him, reaching depths he never before had sounded. Calm stole through him from a centre he never had apprehended. He realized the shallowness of his mental sophistry and felt himself groping toward some stable platform for his statements,—he could no longer say his philosophy of life.

"I wish there were a few simple beliefs worth while for a man to cling to with the tenacity of life and death, instead of swimming about, catching at the flotsam and jetsam of many theologies," he said, at length, moodily.

"There are," Agnes replied. "When we recognize this truth, the flotsam and jetsam will find their place and value. No matter how many terms we use, implying divisions as physical, material, mental, it is worth while to realize that these are all phases of one consciousness, and to hold in our consciousness, the Principle, Unity. It is worth while to believe that Spirit manifests in law from centre to periphery and back to centre of the great creation. It is worth while to realize that we are divine essence and possess constructive power to shape environment, and that, though happiness and achievement are rightful possessions of life, *growth* is its purpose. It is heart-breaking to listen to exhortation when our souls seek vital truths."

"The usual theological pratings are so much cant to

me. The whole nomenclature seems confined to terms that imply asking and taking help. What is prayer, anyhow, but a grand howl of terror at something we are too cowardly to face! To pray for oneself is to act the beggar and induces a beggarly attitude. To pray for others is impertinence. How do we know whether they need peppermints or shoestrings! Only one's own determination avails. If no one can kill us, as Epicurus affirms, because no one can take from us the life principle, then no one can affect us either for good or evil, excepting our own very tiresome selves. I do not want any one praying for me. It is an intrusion on my individuality. 'I hope to meet my pilot face to face.' As far as I see, church training and example cover sin, evade honest obligations and attempt to get something for nothing."

Momentous silence. With spiritual reinforcement, Agnes quoted tenderly, "'Prayer is the contemplation of the facts from the highest aspects of the case.'" Another pause. "My ideals of prayer are very different from yours, as your words indicate," she completed.

"Ideals! I wonder if I have any! I used to,—beautiful ones. I have almost forgotten what they were. Tell me yours!" earnestly, almost beseechingly, seeming to forget they were not alone.

"I wish I could. They are so wonderful my soul is filled with them; but I live far below them and am ashamed."

"Ashamed! You? No, never. Won't you tell me?" he repeated.

"They are almost unspeakable, except in the *living of the life*, and there, too, I fail. Sometime I will try to tell you." The hush in her voice made her listeners feel they were at the portal of her holy of holies.

The soft light of the afternoon sun fell upon the

three as they approached the beautiful home. Again, silence enfolded them. Then a slight breeze shook the leaves as six feet of enthusiastic humanity strode down the path.

"How do you do, Mrs. Lavelle. So-long, Mevin," said Tom, cordially. "What has happened to you, Agnes? You look like a dinky mermaid! Let down your hair and in all respects you will be able to sport with the gold fish! Mrs. Lavelle, you are the one to confide in! Didn't you spend last winter in Gustaga?"

Waving the rhetoric he still held, he continued, with a boyishness that sat refreshingly upon his maturity:

"Listen! I will read to you from the spirit of this book! I assure you, 'thereby hangs a tale!'"

CHAPTER II.

"The tone of seeking is one. The tone of having is another."

Emerson.

"AGNES, I have written my letter."

Mischief and a sweet intensity of purpose permeated the words. Agnes, her heart bounding with an affection almost more maternal than sisterly, looked across to the window-seat where Tom was wound in a tangle of legs and arms. As she approached he adjusted his anatomy, handing her the letter.

"Read it aloud. I want to feel it titillate the tympanum."

Smiling at Tom's big words, and with considerable curiosity, Agnes began:

To the Honorable Miss Mattee Sue Romaine,
Gustaga, Georgia.

My dear Madame,—I know you will pardon my addressing you,—one whom I have never seen; but listen while I plead my cause.

Before me lies a "Work on Composition and Rhetoric" by the renowned godfather of thousands of girls and boys, Dr. Genung,—who labored with me as with you, to crystalize our thought, in English, characterized by purity, precision and propriety, I hope I do not overstep the bounds of this last named quality of rhetoric and of custom, by saluting you, a fellow student, and congratulating myself upon the possession of this book once belonging to you. To the point, Madame. I have received this volume from a New York dealer, and find within, the name and address of a former owner,—as I surmise,—with annotations betraying astuteness of perception, quickness of appreciation and wit, keen and vigorous. Are you learned,

Madame, that quotations leap so freely from your pen to the margins of this volume, or have you, alack, abstracted them from the dictionary? Do you change, mercurially, from grave to gay, as your quatrains and aphorisms would suggest? In such event, fortune help the luckless wight, who, fancying himself basking in the luminosity of your smile, discovers, instead, that he is deluged with the April downpour of your changing humor.

I should like to correspond with you, for having thus, fortuitously chanced (?) upon your name, sentient with charm, I have called upon my imaging faculties for further details of an entrancing picture. It will gratify me if you will verify or correct my mental portrait, and, by complying with my request, amplify the exalted position my imagination accords you.

Pray respond to my letter. Young or old, married or single, I know you are most interesting. Tell me about yourself and some of the events in the life of this book, now in my possession, culminating in its journey forth like a carrier dove, direct to my waiting hand.

As for me,

I am, Inquisitively yours,

TOM LANDELL,

of Beneby, Massachusetts.

Agnes laughed until the tears brimmed over, Tom's well-simulated indignation increasing her mirth.

"What are you scoffing at?" with pretended dignity.

"Boy, boy! Such a letter! You would like to *corispond*! At least, spell the word correctly. I wonder why men are generally so much worse spellers than women."

"I hadn't heard of it," Tom flushed slightly, but refused to be humiliated as he made the correction.

"What a wide acquaintance you must have, to be able to make so sweeping an assertion. I suppose," ironically, "you can prove it by statistics?"

"I wonder if she will answer this extraordinary document."

"Why extraordinary?" his eyes twinkled.

"I never read such a string of words in all my life. What a boy you are!"

"Why a boy?" There was question in the banter.

"That you may grow into the fulness of the coming years. To be a real boy at your age is an element of greatness you will possess, likewise, at sixty. Then, as now, you will be alternately a match for Socrates and George Ade."

"Don't liken me to Socrates! A man, who, as a husband, develops a woman into a scolding Xantippe, must be radically out of gear. Do you suppose my rhetoric-queen put this jessamine here?" He turned the pages and with a lingering tenderness touched the significant little spray. "I don't believe girls do much of that sort of thing nowadays. It touches my heart-strings and sets her apart from the new woman. I'll add to my letter and ask her. Answer to that one question will do more to place her than anything else."

"Success to your adventure and your *corispondence*," teased Agnes, as she left the room and seated herself at the large organ in the hall.

She meditated while its breath came sounding through the pipes, caressing the instrument as if it were a mighty and human creature. When it had given its long awakening sigh, it answered her call. Notes in rapid succession flung forth tone pictures, responding to her imagination, and as these pulsed into surging harmonies, the air was flooded with fragrance as potent and as evident as the moonlight outside. The hall seemed redolent of yellow jessamine, so strong was the projection, by her thought, of the picture in her mind,—fields full of yellow wild-flowers, a girl with bronze hair and sea-green eyes, a southern sky,—and Tom.

At length she ceased playing, lovingly pressed the mute keys, drew down the cover, and bowed her head.

"Home is a dear place," she said, a few minutes later, standing at the library door, viewing, with a happy content, touched with an indefinable wistfulness, the many-alcoved room, then resting her eyes upon the centre, where soft lights fell upon Mr. and Mrs. Landell. "A dear place, dear in every corner, but aglow with inspiration where the father and mother are enshrined." A perceptible halo enhanced the mysterious charm of her lovely face.

Daniel Landell's seeing gaze met his daughter's, with its little thorn of wistfulness standing, militant, close to the rose of content blooming in the garden of her eyes.

"Yes, it is an available spot for nearly every one at some time in life, and remember, dear, the only available spot for any of us is the spot on which we stand. What we make of it determines the futures of its occupants and, therefore, of citizens and of nations. The only question to answer, is, How have we utilized that spot, be it home or Waterloo?"

"Do you mean, father, that each one is in his or her right niche?"

"For the time being, yes. Not until he has proved himself on that spot, is he ready for another test. For this reason, many never forge beyond a fixed place."

"Is that why some meet with constant repetition in life?"

"I think so, and to me it betokens moral ineptitude. The province of experience is to point to its governing principle, which, grasped, leads to new revealments. God never repeats unnecessarily. By the way, Mr. Kerrick asked my advice this morning, about seeking a new pastorate."

"How do you learn everything, father? You never ask questions,—the sort that can be heard. Every one, of every cult and creed, comes to you for solace

and advice," she mused tenderly. "I suppose it is because you present an unbiased mind and are 'a friend of truth.' What is his reason for changing?"

"It was that which put me in mind of him, in connection with what we were saying. His complaint is, that his audiences are unappreciative. I can see that the miasma rising from his discontent is sufficient to drive from him the very appreciation he craves. Constantly, he is sending his soul out of his body by running ahead with his mind, not in contemplation, but in emotional excitement about what he's done or is going to do next. Were I to tell him that such processes are part of the horrors of black magic, he would not understand. He carries his discontent and his soul-bereft endeavors through all his situations, presenting, instead of the results of definite purpose, incongruous effects of inability and doubt. To find his vision, he,—every one,—must determine the value of the spot on which he stands. This leads to discrimination of new values and of new relations and the gradual falling away of what is undesirable."

Agnes waited a full minute before she spoke. The atmosphere of prophecy, which, to the mystification of Ross Mevin, had enwrapped her that afternoon in the garden, rested upon her now. Like one who speaks, not of her own volition, "Some one will come, father, who more clearly interprets the liberty of God," she said, and left the room.

Daniel Landell's eyes followed her comprehendingly.

"Helen," he said slowly to his wife, "Agnes possesses wonderful enfolded spiritual powers," and he watched his daughter as she passed out of sight. "Unconsciously, she is attaining a life ideal, that refuses to be bound by visible limitations."

"I do not consider such unconsciousness any virtue." With a concerned expression, Mrs. Landell laid aside

her book. "I used to, in those days when you and I were asleep and thought it well to be so. I suppose I am partially responsible for the fact that she goes about like a semi-somnambulist, doing some divinely beautiful deeds and some very unwise ones, and, in frantic questionings of wisdom, or, in recovering from blunders, rushing into worse errors. Sometimes, she is wonderful, as you say, then again, she uses neither reason nor intuition, only ungoverned impulse. When she finds this is at fault, she does not train it with sweet reasonableness, but represses it. When, in consequence, it bursts its bonds in hysteria, the result is disastrous. Her attempts at self-effacement are pitiful. Do you suppose that may be traced to childhood training, when, at my side, the book upon my knee, she imbibed the principles of *The Great Stone Face* picking out the small words, while I read the others to her, and supplied interpretations. I wish I had kept still, as I did with Tom, who, thus, had opportunity to grow, naturally, into his own conceptions. I made Agnes study the calculus of life when she was ready only for the truths that two and two make four and that one cannot have one's cake and eat it too."

"You can't prove even that, as we now understand processes," laughed Mr. Landell, "for we have the cake even more incorporately than ever after we have eaten it."

Mrs. Landell laughed, too, and her tension was relaxed. She resumed.

"I think her naturally enlightened mind was puzzled, over what, a few years later, would have been crystal clear. As I see life now, I do not know of a more disastrous training than the repression of the discriminative faculty, by inhibiting self, especially in one as sensitive as Agnes. She has no idea where she serves in the great plan. None of us have for that matter;

but, though it is dangerous to be an egotist, it is pathetic to be possessed, as she is, with a vital and powerful individuality, and an intense belief that she has a definite place in the world's work, and yet be as blind as a bat in a wild hunt for it. I wish she would realize that our mission comes to us, not we to our mission."

"This very training you deplore has taught her devoutly to cultivate soul instead of mind. Because she is in doubt, as you suggest, that very doubt leads her to seek. She has entered this present phase of embodiment with some memory of the law governing intuition,—"

"But far from a complete revealment. She discriminates about everything except herself. In that regard, she is never sure, however right she may be. Do you suppose, Daniel, that might have resulted from reading *Watts on the Mind* at the same ripe age of six? You know she was always taught to say hesitatingly, 'I think!'"

"I recall," smiled Mr. Landell, reminiscently, "that dear little blue book. Timon went into a church and killed a dog," he dreamed, aloud. "That was wrong! Why judge without proof! Timon was not wrong. The dog was mad! Isn't that Agnes all over? Surely it is a splendid attitude for investigation."

"I fear I crushed her spontaneity. I never told her a fairy tale or showed her a stone or a sunset without suggesting that she search for their symbolism. She never sang a song without approaching every tone and word as if they were sacraments to be revealed."

"Which they are, Helen."

"Then came that season of spiritual upheaval for you and tragedy for us both—the death of three babies at the same time."

"Your long illness—"

“When I could give the child no attention and she fell into the hands of dear Luella with her horrible beliefs. Do you know, I found, years afterwards, that their favorite twilight conversations consisted of graphic descriptions of the horrors of the damned, the reading of Dante to confirm their imaginings, and the assurance that Agnes’ beloved baby darlings had a ‘special little room in hell!’”

Mr. Landell’s eyes were fixed, unseeing, upon the mellowed lights in the sconces near-by.

“The first evening home, after that long stay with Luella, when you and I were grappling with death in order to find life for you, she crept timidly near, making no movement to caress me. Attributing this to a sense of strangeness, I took her in my arms. She resisted. ‘It isn’t right,’ she said, struggling, ‘I must love only God’—I was appalled.”

“I remember how I seized upon her as soon as I learned the state of her mind,—as much as I have ever learned it,—and having had it emphasized by her going into convulsions when I took up the Bible in her presence, and having been several times roused by her screaming in the night in terror lest she hear the ‘*midnight cry*.’ I disciplined her forcefully in views into which I had grown naturally and gradually. I had no patience with Luella’s teachings, and as for her preacher husband’s—”

“I have patience with them for they are a process of growth; but the inner divine meaning of those beliefs had come to me and for the time I was forgetful of their horrors. These had faded from my mind or been merged in wider understanding. The glories of the real intent were too bright for me to see past them to terrors such as were presented to Agnes’ imaginative mind. My spiritual unfoldment was then too immature to see the import, yet too advanced to accept the

symbol for the real. I was in the maze of light that comes often from release of tension; in the stunning, rather than the ministering effects of illumination. Like Martha, and seemingly, of necessity, we were too cumbered with serving to recognize and welcome the unfolding Christ within her as we did in Tom. Still, the isolation she has endured has brought her, as nothing else could, to spiritual illumination."

"She is rampant in renunciation and covers her heart-breaking sense of aloneness by a frigid exterior. The religious frenzies to which she was exposed at Luella's have made self-abnegation a perfect fetish with her. Her whole thought is to do for others, with scant judgment as to her capacity for, or the wisdom of, doing it. I quiver to think what must have been her state of mind when she asked Dr. Tumbril at one of Luella's state dinners,—she always was crucifying the flesh and pandering to it at the same time,—"

"What was it? I can see her now, the darling, perched on the dictionary, with her little curls bobbing so prettily,—"

"Trembling with horror and excitement, she burst out passionately, 'Dear Dr. Tumbril, if the devil goes about continually, as you say, trying to catch little girls with his pitchfork so as to burn them, *please*, when does he get time to attend to his fires!'"

"Intuitively, she is now far beyond the state of consciousness which dwells in such conditions; but with her Why-did-Timon-kill-the-dog education, she cannot keep her mentality at rest. Her spirit is constantly drawing her out of that habit of acceptance."

"If only I were sure of her being in the spiritual planes instead of in this psychic *mash* with which the world that thinks it thinks, is teeming! I fear it. Either she represses her emotions as if they were her

slaves or unleashes them, and, like the dogs of Actæon, they overwhelm her."

"I do not fear. She will not stop at this law of opposites,—this negative expression of an idea towards the unfoldment of which she is moving. She will have less part in sorrowful experiences and blundering mistakes as she unifies her intelligence with the divine Storehouse. 'The Christ-consciousness,' Helen, 'is the perception and realization of Universal Purpose, Universal Unity and the Universal Presence.' 'If we are stayed on God at the centre, we need have no fear.'"

CHAPTER III.

"The Christ-consciousness is the perception and the realization of the Universal Purpose, the Universal Unity and the Universal Presence."

Benj. Fay Mills.

AGNES left the library in the state of exaltation always accompanying her prophetic moods; but, even as she passed from the brilliantly lighted hall to the darkness of her room, the inevitable overwhelmed her. Why was it her bitter fate that, after a period of vision, her physical strength should vanish? Why the reaction so overwhelming?

As in a frenzy, she undressed, and slipped into a gown, holding her breath and clenching her teeth to suppress the screams that struggled for utterance. Sinking by the bedside, she clutched the coverlid, burying her face in its friendly snowy folds. A wild hurly-burly of failures, of blatant nothings, assailed her; the pressure of ten thousand demands weighed agonizingly upon her. She felt as if Pandemonium were unloosed and intelligences, vampire-like, were sucking from her the strength they ghoulishly desired, attempting to force themselves into manifestation through the medium, not only of her organism, but of her integrity. In the intensity of her repression and terror, a sense of strangling overcame her and, with a wild gasp and a fierce mental clutch at the thing, which, poor and inefficient though it might be, she called *herself*, she gave a hoarse, almost inarticulate, cry.

"Agnesia!"

A voice at the door sent a soothing sense of protection into the density of her horror.

"Agnesia!" and Tom entered the room.

"Tomsey," lifting heavy, frightened eyes, "I tried so hard to control myself, I did indeed. I have been struggling here for an hour."

"This is no time for control." Tom crossed to where his sister sobbed in agony. "Scream all you want to. This house is altogether too quiet."

Disappearing into the bathroom, he returned with a footbath full of steaming water.

"Get into this. Where is your rug? Now, dearie," he cuddled the soft silken wrap about her as he spoke, "put your head on my coat breast and your footsies in the water."

Blindly, Agnes obeyed. She held his hand and, in her attempts at repression, set her teeth into his sleeve, that she might smother her cries. Gradually the nerve strain relaxed and she gave a sad, sobby little laugh.

"They call me a woman of poise, Tomsey, of poise and of self-control!"

"You tell a big fairy tale when you say you have no strength. Phew! You pinched me black and blue!"

"Horrible!" The tears burned behind her eyeballs.

"Why no! When you suffer so, it would be a pity if I could not help you out a pinch!" he returned, for he was at the punning stage, which is as incident to certain mental attitudes as mumble-peg and marbles are to youth. Hastily, he added hot water to that cooling in the tub, and the paroxysm died away. "Cheer up, Agnesia, you have not had an attack like this for a long time."

"Tom, father says the only available spot is the one we stand on. Mine is so full of pain, physical and mental, I dare not use the spot on which I stand. I

have tried, but again and again have been thrown back by the fact that I cannot utilize this wealth of power within me, because, in some way I cannot see, I have confronted the law and been broken on its wheel. Why can't I find out what is the matter? Why couldn't I years ago, when I tried and tried,—” sobs choked her utterance, “I tried and God wouldn't let me, and people are always telling me I would be better if I went about and did more. God won't let me. Things that are nothing to others inundate me, and, after a long time, I find that they meant a great deal. It isn't that I keep myself apart. What is it? I have thought sometimes I was being prepared for a great work, but that can't be, for what I attempt doesn't *do*, somehow.”

“Perhaps, unconsciously to yourself, you are being prepared. You seek marvels.”

“I do not, and, as for consciousness, I am in the cosmic consciousness so constantly that I stand apart and observe everything I do. I never have been allowed to be unconscious in work or in play. Do you remember the man who longed for truth and saw it and went mad? You don't suppose,—”

“No, no, dearie!” He caught the hand she threw out with a despairing gesture. “Never! Your feet are set on the Rock! You are different from others and always will be, for your consciousness is alive and you see vitality in countless things in which others see nothing. You live a million pulsations to their one. Why grieve that you fly like the eagle instead of crawling like the worm?”

“I dare not use the spot on which I stand. I am making nothing of it.”

“You are making a great howl of self-condemnation of it, to my mind, and that is the cause of most of your cataclysms. What do you mean by using?”

“Doing something! *Being* something!”

"Being something, yes. That's the one thing you—we—can't avoid. The quicker we get that into our minds, the better. It is the quality we invest it with that comes within our jurisdiction."

"I have never thought of it so," and calm rose hopefully out of her despair. "I long to be of service to all and am balked at every turn."

Tom's eyes twinkled, then, with his inimitable humor,

"That is an ambition. Greed to possess is traceable in everything. Hog is known by his attitude of mind, throughout his changing shapes and careers, from protomorphic to man."

"You would make fun of your coffin."

"I certainly would, for expecting to keep me confined."

"I want to *do*. Why am I cut off from everything useful?"

"You have whip-lashed yourself, physically, almost to death and you know it."

"I do, and it is to get away from this,—oh, I don't know what,—there it is again,—I do wish Cousin Matilda would let me alone."

"What has Cousin Matilda to do with what we are talking about?"

"She wants me."

"Agnes!" Tom looked at his sister intently. "This must be stopped. Your nerves,—"

"I can prove it is something besides nerves; but what, I don't know."

"Chirky," he continued to add humor to persuasiveness in his attempt to help his beloved sister, "you seem to have no more idea of what a day's work means, than that mask you were buying for Jimmy Parsons when you reeled over in a dead faint after you had trained and conducted a pageant, run a church

bazaar, looked after the house for Josef Hal's wife while the baby was on the way, continued your studies in oratory and music, and attended to literary and other work at intervals."

"I never,—well, if I did, they wanted me to!"

"You are too noble to mind the *they* who are scandal-mongers; why then, listen to the *they* who try to own you when God has given you a Thinker! If you question the accuracy of what I say, look back to your diary,—you were writing an exhaustive one at the time, while acting as treasurer of some benevolent building fund, and, rather than come to father or me, sitting up night after night puzzling over accounts until so weary you couldn't see straight."

"I am glad you give me credit for something. It is true, I *never* call on others to help me out of what my ill-advised activities get me into, I want to do the Lord's work. I am His for Him to use."

"No one pours water into a filled or cracked bowl, at least, not if they have good sense. Give your Maker credit for as much intelligence as you know you yourself should have."

"He has it all; I have none."

Tom looked puzzled. Presently, he continued,

"I am not criticizing, but I do want to help you. Think how little, in the world's way, father does; but he is felt everywhere. If he does speak it is worth one's while to listen."

"People simply adore you and father. You don't seem to make any attempt to attract them even by wishing,—"

"Wishing and longing, you know, are the poorest methods of attracting. They generally succeed in repelling. The only reason I know for people's liking me is that I am so everlastingly delighted because I

find life worth while, they like to come round to find out what's the joke."

"That isn't all of it. You know it. I am radiantly happy and enthusiastic in all I do, yet people stand off and watch me as the lions eyed Daniel in the den."

"Perhaps they realize that you move in a larger orbit than they, which sweeps you into clearer recognition of verities than they possess, and fail to comprehend that still you hold fast to much they know and love and understand. That is all, dearie, I feel sure. Realize that, and one barrier will come down at once."

"If I talk to those who don't understand, they are afraid of me, and if I talk to those who do know they are afraid I won't understand them. I am in a dreadful position and I don't know what to do! The only ones who come to me are those who don't help me. Don't I need help, too, Tomsey, don't I?"

Tom sat silent till the rising storm abated. After awhile he said, thoughtfully, "If you don't want an attack of neuralgia, send after that heart-breaking admission of lack of perception as to the universal purpose, your strong faith in the working out of law. Make it strong enough to counteract the poison you have given yourself."

"It is excruciating to be forced to follow directions blindly, instead of being aided in establishing conditions I know exist. Matilda, stop!" She threw out her arms as if freeing herself from some suffocating pressure, "I know that too often my mind's pictures are mud-houses, instead of cathedrals,—but how to supplant one with the other!"

"In your sincere search for truth,—far beyond mine," Tom dropped his bantering manner, "you have neglected to act upon one statement of principle, and law has brought you to a standstill."

Again the light of kindly humor crept into his eyes

and softened his words, while it brought an answering smile to Agnes' wistful ones and a line of strength to her quivering lips.

"This is the statement: 'It is waste to take up and use an experience received through any organism, unless that organism is strong enough and refined enough for use.' When it is strong enough, the owner of the organism will find that many trying experiences are neither sought nor presented. Strengthen your organism, Agnes, the physical body,—and refuse to subject it to any experience beyond its strength."

"There is some sense and a lot of nonsense in what you say. How would a baby grow symmetrically if he did not use his mechanism!"

"Use, yes. Abuse, no."

"I know I do not make the connection clear between my ideas and their expression. Why not?"

"Habit of thought, perhaps. There are physicians who might dismiss your attacks of alternate exaltation and gloom, unusual strength and complete exhaustion, with the diagnosis, neurasthenia, and, according to their school, urge immediate and absolute rest, which is as sensible as to release the tension of a violin string too suddenly. We psychurgists, who assist the formation of physical structure and function by the introduction of noble mind pictures, as patterns to be worked into the material expression, would see, in these attacks of yours, the conditions which induce their expression, and observe phases of character unfoldment out of sequence, by reason of which, the nerves lack the transmitted knowledge to coöperate with the finer forces of mind as the soul presents them."

Agnes veered from one view of the question to another with her usual desire to compass the horizon, not caring whether she appeared to be man's wise man or God's fool.

"Spirit makes our organs and endows them with latent power equal to their tasks."

"Through that very statement, you explain why so many come to you for help. Despite all your fears, inherently, you know Truth."

"I can't trace it. I get a blurred message. Matilda, let me alone!"

"You seem to be getting some sort of message from Cousin Matilda, or *think* you do," said Tom, curiously. "I believe it is the latter. Why do you talk with her, a mile away, at the other end of town, while you are here in your room with me?"

"She will not let me alone. Night after night, when I try to sleep, she impresses me with the idea that I should be doing something for her, or something different from what I am doing. But I do not get the message clearly enough to act upon it intelligently."

"It is a mental state. You are everlastingly trying to help people who don't need it, as well as those who do. Your mind gets tired out, following your immense self-accreted family of incapables, until it constructs images which you believe come from somewhere."

"I thought so for a long time; but these feelings,—if you wish to call them that, rather than messages,—are always followed by a message or letter indicating the very hour I am disturbed. I do all I can for her,—"

"Shades of Cæsar's ghost!" Again Tom adopted humor for his instrument, thinking he could thus relieve the tension and because the whole affair seemed to him unutterably ridiculous. "It is just as disreputable to believe living persons are using your organism as it is to dress in greasy wrappers and live over the green-grocer's to the tune of a quarter for introduc-

ing you to your dead grandmother's mother-in-law. Put it down as nerves at once."

"Do such things ever happen to you?"

"I hope not!" Tom straightened his shoulders assuredly. "Every morning I see what I see with my eyes,—"

"What eyes?"

"These eyes. I hear what I hear with these ears. I touch what I touch with these fingers, and I believe—what are you doing? You will suffocate me!"

He drew aside her hand which had seized his nostrils and covered his mouth.

"Could you *see* what gave you life,—what I cut off just then?"

"I want you to stop your notions, Agnes dear," ignoring her virile illustration. "This about Matilda is coincidence. It is dangerous to indulge in such fancies."

"I can prove it in the morning, for I am sure to get a letter from her; but you still could call it coincidence. It isn't very late," and, having recovered from her hysteria, she sprang to her feet. "We will prove or disprove this, here and now. I shall be as glad as you if I am mistaken."

In a few minutes they were in the cool, sweet summer night, on the way to Cousin Matilda's. They found her sitting on the piazza.

"I had made up my mind it was quite time for my relatives to inquire if I were alive or dead," was her pleasant greeting. "I despatched a letter to you this evening, Agnes, and one to you, Tom. They should reach you in the morning."

"I do try to see you every day, Cousin Matilda," said Agnes, pitifully, while Tom stood dumb before the demonstration of a truth at which he had scoffed but of which he had experienced nothing. "My time is filled with calls I cannot seem to control."

"Control them, as I do," was the sombre rejoinder. "Very early in life I was taught to control my will and to control conditions."

"Did you ever take up the study of intelligence, Cousin Matilda?" said Tom, wickedly. "It is interesting and of very broad scope. Is there anything we may do for you?"

"I thank you, no," was the austere response. "My maids are allsufficient."

"They serve the same purpose as the armor in the hall,—add to family prestige?"

"They do more; they add to my comfort, which some of the younger members of my family seem to care little about."

"We cared enough to come down here after we'd gone to bed," burst forth Tom. He was furious with the old woman for Agnes' sake, but his words were as rose leaves on a green sward. She replied,

"That is quite as it should be. Agnes, I very much wish to see you to-morrow morning, early. Shall we say seven o'clock?"

"I wouldn't," advised Tom, for Agnes was too overwhelmed to assert herself, "it does not agree with my sister to get up early."

"So I recall. It occurred to me it would be a very good plan to correct that habit. I—"

"Perhaps she will drop in later in the forenoon," and Tom drowned Agnes' acquiescence and rather tersely bade Miss Bolden good night, as he drew his sister, quivering, away.

CHAPTER IV.

"Rich minds sleep. Why talk of action!"

Emerson.

THE brother and sister retraced their steps in the soothing stillness of the summer night. They looked to the heavens, which vouchsafed no solution to this experience. Instead, little forks of atmosphere, flanging up from the horizon, seemed to hold upon their tips, tidbits of knowledge that the luminous, unfathomable blue gathered into its mysterious depths before their minds or imaginations could feed upon them.

"Dear little girl!" There was a different quality in Tom's voice. "What a tragedy you are facing! Is the sweep of your orbit, then, so much larger than mine? When I shut my door and refuse my mail, I am alone. You never are!"

"Never! My room is full of mentalities making demands on me. I tell you, it is not the work I do, it is this obsession I do not know how to deal with, that incapacitates me. Can you tell, weeks ahead, when some one is going to ask, impel or try to compel you to do something? Can you trace every move they make, so that when it is disclosed you are too exhausted to meet or repel it?"

"No; but if I did, I'd take it as a game and, instead of worrying, be assured I was getting the campaign into my hands in advance. How is it I never knew this about you? Why, yes, I have. As far back as I can remember I have known your crying attacks to be forerunners of something or other. But I don't

think I'm an analyst. Now I've waked up to study human nature,—it's nerves, though."

"Please don't say that again. It may be, in part, it may be wholly that. I feel sure it has nothing to do with spirituality. I am dreadfully afraid it is emotionalism and I abhor emotions!"

"You need medicine,—"

"Yes—but I need something else. I need training as well as treating."

"We treat mental states,—"

"Don't confound abnormal mental states with an unusually large sweep of mental vision."

"Nor should you condemn emotions wholesale because you are not pleased with the messages they bring you. In any case, body must be made to coördinate with the duty given it to fulfil."

"It isn't much use to talk about it," sighed Agnes, wearily. "The other side always makes me feel as if I were fit for Bloomingdale, when I know I am just a pollywog struggling into the frog stage. It frightens me when any one acts as if I were not normal—"

"I know this, anyhow," said Tom, positively, "it can do no harm to place your body under strict training. Then, if this is unfoldment, it will be coördinated to its duty, and if nerves, these strange conditions will disappear."

"What is that?" Agnes seized Tom's arm quickly, then released it.

"It is Harmon Fraser."

"What makes him walk so peculiarly?"

"Dear little child, who lives in dreams, he is, what is vulgarly called, drunk."

"I thought he was most exemplary."

"So many think. He lives under the delightful cognomen of night-drinker."

"What a terrible tragedy for his wife! I should

think she would be frightened to death. Perhaps that is why she seemed so disagreeable yesterday. I thought it was because she didn't like me. There it is again. I get impressions; but cannot trace them. It makes a dreadful mix-up."

She retired for a moment into what Tom did not recognize as an ominous silence. Meanwhile, Harmon Fraser reeled toward them. To Tom's horror, Agnes held out her hand in friendly manner.

"Good evening, Mr. Fraser, are you ill? Please go directly home," she said, softly and persuasively. "One can tell by your gait that it is quite necessary."

The man looked at her uncomprehendingly, then lifted his hat. "Miss Landell, good evening. I am glad to speak with you; but permit me to say that if I choose to circle about in the moonlight instead of walking on the square, I feel privileged to do so, though I thank you for your interest in me." He wavered on, disregarding Tom, who stood aside, dumb-founded.

Agnes paused till Fraser had passed; then, her eyes filled with tears, "What is it, Tom? I try to obey the teaching, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive,' and, 'love thy neighbor as thyself,'—and with what result! I have given unstintedly all my life; now I have no vitality left, like thousands who have followed the same path, come to the same turning, and lain down to die. Yet the books and preachers give as the universal panacea, do, do, do, when you haven't strength left from your former doing to wash your own face, and have to ask some one else to do it for you. If unhappy, do for some one; it will make you happy. If bitter, do for some one you dislike. It will sweeten your frame of mind. For what? To get! The whole system of self-sacrifice seems built on colossal selfishness. What is it? Where do I fail?"

"I think you read other people's orders instead of your own. If you are working yourself to death, why hang on your dressing-table some spur to the lazy! The saving of self to the self is destructive; wise conservation of self is constructive. It is more blessed to give than to receive, but some of you saintly givers must learn to receive more freely in order to give more intelligently."

"But for the comprehension of all you dear ones, I might have been in the mad house. You understand that I represent a phase, not a disease. To know I am giving you anxiety adds to my torture. I don't mind being crucified; but I cannot bear to have any one suffer for me,—Jesus or any one! It makes me almost insane to think of His sufferings. I shall go mad if I add to His sorrow. I must bear my own burdens; grow so strong in unity with the Great Purpose, that no weight seems heavy. God never meant that we should shunt everything on to Jesus, who came to teach us how to become equal to service, not to evade it. I am not unbalanced nor blasphemous. I am struggling for truth."

"Truth is balance and faith is one of the steps by which we realize it."

"I wish I had had your start in life. I was taught the old conception of self-sacrifice until I thought the only way to be Christ-like was to go about mangled and half dead. Now, because it discloses dishonesty and incapacity, it is positively vulgar not to be well and poised."

"If you feel that way, why cling to dogmas that attribute to your Leader, the very qualities you deplore, and which I believe He never had. This very minute you seem semi-paralyzed because an ill-advised attempt to teach a man, not in possession of his faculties, is ill-received. You are so wise you appal me, and so—"

"Stupid?"

"Call it that—that you astound me. It must come from mixed ideals."

"I have one Ideal; but I am mixed in my ideas of reaching it. I sit Sunday after Sunday striving to hold to my Ideal of universal purpose, unity and the Universal Presence through the presentation of such ideas as Mr. Kerrick's. Sunday after Sunday, from the pulpit, Christianity is used as the lion's skin covering the donkey of dogma, with ears of deceit and of conceit, and a voice braying ignorance."

"Why do it! The constant struggle to reconcile such ideas with your Ideal is largely responsible for your nervous condition—"

"It is more than a nervous condition. I am seeking and *growing* through many phases." Her mind reverted to her previous statement and she shuddered.

"Think of Christ being likened to a cow-catcher!" Her lips almost refused the words. "Mr. Kerrick used that figure, and went on to say that as the faucet at the end of the car makes clean the hands and soil of garments, so Jesus,—! Think of proclaiming The Great One, scavenger of the world. Mr. Kerrick is not the only one who makes such comparisons. Do you suppose our ideas seem as crude and immature to others more unfolded,—do you suppose they do to Jesus?"

"I suspect He loves to observe unfoldment, and, pending larger understandings, rejoices even in that conception of Himself. I cannot but feel, however, that it is useless suffering for you to force yourself to listen to what I, in my stage of growth, call blasphemous stuff. Why stay there?"

"I am told to."

"Aren't you a free moral agent? I should think

you would have delirium tremens thinking ahead to Sunday."

"It is no outward compulsion. If we have a truth we should remain where we can impart it to those who have it not."

"If their conceptions lead them no higher than to a cow-catcher," he shuddered, "why confine your flight to their limitations? They need one nearer the earth to teach them."

"Or farther from it. I remain to assist their growth."

"No, no, little sister," Tom lifted a strand of hair that had fallen over her eyes, tenderly drawing it back from the noble forehead and the straining brows raised in fierce endeavor to open spiritual eyes to the relation of truth with All-Truth, "you help me because you see far more deeply than I do. We *walk* side by side through this existence, but you fly above me and, from above, cry gladly, 'Come up, soul, into the sunlight, where caterpillars are butterflies and visions have become realizations.'"

"How can we help others if we are not willing to suffer?"

"Not by dwelling on the suffering. Until we rise through it spiritually we will be stamped with it physically. We must be careful what we brood over, for brooding brings the latent into expression, be it a viper or a Christ."

"Don't I do anything right?" Agnes searched her brother's face wistfully.

"Indeed, yes; but you are so afraid you won't be ready for crucifixion, you contemplate it constantly and are always getting the nails ready for yourself. You may be wiser than I but I am sure this self-condemnation is not constructive. Don't try to do for awhile. *Let* the divine life of your being float into

every separate minute from a centre of trustful rest. Don't be swung by impression, suggestion or open request, into reading to some old Mrs. Kazook, if justice to yourself as an instrument advises you to withhold your hand. However true it is that you do not ask help when ill or exhausted, it is also true that you make a very telling demand on the sympathies and concern of those who love you. Be strong enough not to pile up or dream obligations you have no physical strength to fulfil. Stop boiling an egg with forty horse power, or paring apples with a Damascus blade."

"You are incorrigible!" Agnes laughed despite herself.

"I haven't finished! Aren't you trying to follow a rule of a certain psychologist to act out your emotions and express your impressions?"

"Yes. I have repressed so much,—"

"The cure must go back of that. The expression theory will do for those who have one impression or so a year. You have a thousand a second. Your imaging and constructive faculties are unfolded far beyond your strength. Eliminate all in your visionings you do not desire to see manifest. Each instant has its quota of possibilities; do not overload it. Stop breaking your heart over what you see, or responding to all demands made upon you. The more I study life, the more I realize why each person is where he is; little Kerrick with his wails; you, with your cataclysms; and the Great Christ, waiting to shine His light into our funny, fussy ways."

He waited a moment, then with child-like sweetness, added drolly, "Like the well-known advertisement, 'There's a reason. Look inside!'"

"I read about annihilation of self until I feel that not to bear the world on my shoulders is proof of bestial selfishness, and to be ill, a public announcement

of failure. Self cannot be such an awful thing since we have been given consciousness of it; and the suggestionists are brutal," Agnes continued to rage as the agony of self-condemnation grew in her eyes.

"Don't let the suggestionists worry you," Tom assured her. "We undertake investigation on the basis of what *we are*, not of what *it is*,—if you can understand my English, for we can comprehend no more than we are on the path to becoming. Many of us would have blood-clots caused by congestion were we to follow the advice of some writers and practitioners who have only a material conception of what they attempt to teach, or are on the horrible outskirts of the psychic. The average clergyman is obliged to verify his philosophy with his tradition, and the average physician starts his premises in disease. There is much more to it all than telling a patient he is well when he doesn't understand the entirety of that statement, and which runs very close to an untruth on the lips of many who use the phrase. Neither is it enough to 'hold the thought.' Far worse is it to be told to repress,—the favorite word of certain nerve specialists."

"Oh dear—"

"Don't say, 'Oh dear,' that way. Life is so teeming with wonders, I love it and its problems. All these stages of growth from cell through worm to man are demonstrated in sequence, through the nine months' gestation of the human embryo, and think what is done for us and what we must do for ourselves after we get here! Does that indicate that the purpose of life is self-annihilation?"

"Dr. Brentford's theory of treating nerves is to impress upon the patient that he is constantly inferior to his surroundings."

"Select your own visions and stand on your own platform. I don't wonder you are confused. At one

and the same time you are mounting a rostrum of terror at your incomprehensible mental states; sitting with the infant class lest you should think you have grown before you have; clinging to tradition with one part of your brain and repudiating it with another; giving when you have no strength or moral right to do so; trying to make your feet fit footprints your head refuses to let you follow."

"What must I do?"

"If messages from Infinite are jumbled in transmission, the history of the world is changed; yet, many of you philanthropists have not even settled on your receiving station or assured yourself of the recipient's address."

"If I seem uncertain, it is not so much that I am unassured of the fundamentals, as that I am seeking my best. I am not dissatisfied with what I find so much as determined to do better next time,—excepting when I make some of my dreadful mistakes."

"Then you are so remorseful that you incapacitate yourself. I never have seen one so self-forgetful and self-immolating one minute and so self-dissecting the next. If it is not self-condemnation, it is mental puzzling that clouds the pictures that are to bring you joy."

"Tell me what to do?"

"You are a constant blessing. You stimulate other minds; you give generously of your own thought and open their minds to think it too; you are a missionary of souls as well as of bodies, constantly in the sweet attitude of pupil before a teacher; no one I know gives more generously of all she possesses and is more unthinking of herself; no one is more full of joy until exhaustion breeds discouragement. Then you go to extremes, either of action or inaction, and take all the blame."

"What a distress I must be to you all."

"I will tell you the effect your methods during your last long illness had upon the family. You had read so much about the good an invalid can do from the sick room that your nerves were agog to prove the statement. The more you tested it the more intoxicated with the possibilities you became. You sent flowers to every old woman you could think of, but never by any chance, were two in juxta-proximity. You could not pen a word yourself, but called on every one in the house to write to any one you could think of, whose name sounded lonesome."

"What a travesty on well-doing. Preach more from the text."

"Then here goes! Am I giving to please myself; to relieve my congestion or that of some one else? If I give in sheer nervousness or irritability at watching the clumsiness of others, am I not deluding myself into the belief that I am generous, while really cheating others out of their legitimate right to do for themselves!"

"It seems to me true giving should help the giver as well as the recipient."

"So I think. If it cause disappointment or depletion there is something wrong. Often it takes more strength to keep hands off others' lives than to lay them on for what we suppose is blessing. It is a divine privilege to enter the sanctuary of other lives. Jesus took years in preparation for what we plunge into as a pastime or a diversion."

"Why do we believe it a greater mission to help others than ourselves? Indeed, how can we serve other lives, until, like Jesus, we have learned through service to our own!"

"It is not fierce physical activity that induces growth, or concentration on noses or crystals, thereby

inhibiting intelligence through exhaustion of the faculty of attentiveness. Growth comes through training the faculties to select from our desires only what is worth perpetuating. Worth and preparation coöperate for attainment. Here we are at home. Don't allow Matilda to tweak you about as she chooses. Good bye, and, if you need me, call."

Agnes was a long time preparing for the night. At length she put out the light and raised the shades. She was by no means satisfied with Tom's deductions, though realizing their value.

"They go such a very little way," she sighed. "Still, I will follow his advice." Then, with the strange swerving of decision so often succeeding her introspection, "At all events, I shall go to Cousin Matilda's in the morning."

As she puzzled, her eyes were fixed dreamily upon a light beaming across field and road, from a window in the hotel where Ross Mevin was summering. The light flashed higher for an instant, then disappeared; but, her eyes still resting where the light had cast its rays, she continued to seek her vision in the silence of the night.

CHAPTER V.

To-day is a message. Find it and express it.

AGNES woke with the oppressed feeling of a duty not done. It took but an instant to trace the reason. She was to go to Cousin Matilda's. Her head ached and she needed the morning's rest; but she arose, and, as it was nearly seven, rushed through her dressing and hurried down the quiet streets to Matilda Bolden's house. A drowsy maid informed her that her cousin was still asleep. Uncertain what to do, she sat on the piazza, trying to train her irritation at least into indifference.

About nine o'clock, one of the family servitors, whom Tom had likened to the armor on the wall, announced that Miss Bolden would receive her. Mounting the stairs, she found her hostess enjoying a cup of coffee.

"Good morning!" She looked up from the sugar-bowl she was contemplating, and greeted Agnes with the satisfied air of a faithful servant, who, having chased to service all recalcitrant workers of the vineyard, was now come to her reward.

"How do you do, Cousin Matilda," Agnes responded, with a forced quality of tone born of the headache, the waiting, and the realization that she had been, weakly, true to Tom's diagnosis. "What can I do for you?"

"Nothing at all," was the frigid response, "I only wished to see if you held your affection for me superior to the claims of slumber. I have to dress for

town, so will ask you to breakfast alone down-stairs. Good-bye. Have a pleasant day," and Agnes found herself as summarily dismissed as she had been summoned.

Vexed as she was, she could but be amused at Matilda's generalship, and, all appetite gone, she turned toward home. As she approached the hotel, she decided to call on Louise Lavelle. She found the piazza buzzing with mild excitement over a prospective picnic, and was besieged by her special coterie to join them.

"We don't start till eleven. Do come," pleaded Grace Herrick.

"Yes, Miss Landell," Dr. Brentford added his voice to the petition, "you know it is said of summer hotels that they provide for their guests nearly everything save rest."

"That, too, will be included, when the demand for it is as great as now exists for a merry-go-round of aimless excitement," returned Agnes. "Now, we all seem to want to seat care on the backs of winged horses, hoping to lose it in their reckless flight."

"But with unerring precision, the load is delivered to us, unlightened, after the price has been paid and the circuit completed," concluded Brentford pessimistically. "However we strive to evade the burden, at the exit it is returned to us, the same old weight of existence nothing can lessen—"

"Oh, yes," said Agnes intensely, "it disappears, in response to exalted purpose!"

Dr. Brentford stared.

"Of course! I see you are an idealist! That is 'caviare to the general,' but it will be one course for the picnic, and moralizing is a splendid 'pièce de résistance.'"

Suddenly, Agnes felt a sense of desolation sweep over her. She realized that she had evaded the ex-

pected repartee. With her usual haste to condemn herself she was overwhelmed with her own reproach. As the nearest escape, she agreed to join the party.

In tally-hos they passed down the woodland roads to Mount Nodel. Here they alighted, some to go on to the hilltop, some to gather mountain blueberries. While the sun was still high they packed away the fruit and mounted the coaches for the homeward drive.

Sitting by Agnes' side, Ross Mevin saw her, this afternoon, apparently the happiest of them all. She was thoroughly exhausted by the events of the day and this forced her into a false vivacity. To the observing, the undercurrent of her thought penetrated her brilliance and gave an aloofness which alternately attracted and repelled. She it was who had constantly suggested to these amusement seekers occupation for unappropriated hours, yet she seemed but an onlooker, visioning new dispensations. "My Lady of Moods," once Mevin would have called her; but this wonderful summer was bringing him revelations. He was perceiving that these changes in her were of nobler growth.

He sat in delicious peace, with a happy sense of walking with her in the galleries of her mind, whose treasures, though not, as yet, revealed, were no longer completely closed against him, as they had been but the day previous. He was only at the entrance, he knew. In spirit, he moved with her swift transitions, at the same time puzzled and blinded before her slow readjustment to the conditions the changes heralded. In threading his way through unknown labyrinths, his study of what he saw and his conjecture as to what he might discover, led his mind to an afternoon at the Symphony, when Schumann Heineck sang. He had sat in the rear of the hall, where the mellow light and the distance etherialized the setting of the singer, and, together with his own desire, served likewise to etherialize the mes-

sage the wonderful voice was to convey. He loved music for the vast impersonality it unfolded, and, the more independently to grasp tone-relationships that should convey to him only the innermost essence of the ultimate idea, he tried always to shun acquaintance with composer, opus or artist.

That afternoon the singer presented a soil as virgin to the ideal of the message as was possible in an atmosphere always imbued more with musical culture than musical comprehension. The pleasant face, the velvet gown, the hat with its many plumes he saw not. The spaces these had occupied grew luminous before him, irradiating white light moving in spirals, finally becoming still. Stealing from out the vortex, evolved slowly the floating draperies, the white cowl, the sad face of a holy sister.

Amazed at the transformation, he had been surprised into asking one near by the name of the selection, for, true to his custom, he had refused a programme.

Schubert's *Young Nun* had been forming before his vision, through the medium of the singer's thought, expressed through voice. As the directing force was withdrawn, the vision faded slowly. Again she sang. Again he had seen only radiance; then a form, symbolic of *Death and the Maiden*, had become manifest, held before his eyes through the power of her thought concentrated in song. Was it a trick of the optic nerve, he wondered,—an obsession, or a veritable portrayal of thought-forms through the motive power of the singer! He felt sure it could be attributed to neither.

Again, his mind centred in Agnes, whom, after all, it had never left, since it was in attempting to analyze her that this experience was recalled. As his heart rested lovingly upon her, he saw that the very texture of her skin changed under the influence of some

readjustment. This was verified, when, a moment later, she turned and said,

"Will you assist me to alight, Mr. Mevin? Some one in that house we are passing needs me."

"How did you catch the message?" Dr. Brentford, who had overheard, eyed her quizzically. "Those creosote shingles do not advertise necessity. Your quality of mercy must be strained into Eve's curiosity for a glimpse of the interior!"

"Eve's curiosity will ultimately prove the world's salvation," was Agnes' quick response, as she sprang from the coach.

"If it is as far-reaching as that, by all means run along and satisfy it. Be sure to bring back a woman's shopping bag of gossip," shivered Brentford, in mock nervousness.

"Dicky Brentford, stop teasing Agnes," inserted Grace Herrick. "Don't you know she isn't like the rest of us? If she received a message from the moon, I'd know it came in a perfectly legitimate manner. What makes you worry her?"

"Because I am interested in phenomena," retorted Brentford, cynically. "How did you get the word, Miss Landell?"

A troubled look crept into her face.

"I cannot tell."

Turning, she followed the path to the vine-arched door of the cottage. The afternoon sun glinted through the trumpet vines. As she stepped onto the piazza, their blossoms framed her in orange, green and gold. They stirred and swayed and, on the gentle whisper of their welcome, came through the open casement the sound of a human cry,—

"Help me, God! I am alone, and desolate!"

Every fibre of Agnes' being responded. Withal, supernal joy thrilled her that she had not passed the

summons by. Following the sound, her attention was attracted through the window, unconsciously noting the veriest details of the interior. Even a few dying flowers in a vase upon a table arrested her eyes, as adding to the desolation of the scene. Occupying a large part of the cottage, of quaint architectural design, was a room of splendid proportions, beautifully ceiled, wainscotted and floored with old oak. Through the chimney of the large fireplace the sunlight lay in flickering gold upon the floor. A man, whose stillness resembled that of death, lay on a bed of rare workmanship. Kneeling beside him was a woman.

Absorbing into his very soul the flood of gorgeous color glorifying the portico, Mevin was awakened to tragedy by seeing Agnes hasten past him to the tally-ho.

"Dr. Brentford, come quickly," she sped the words in advance of her flying feet, "some one is dying in that house."

"I?" drawled Brentford, with a long-drawn, upward inflection. "It is true I have learned to mix pills; but that, by no means, makes a traveling emergency hospital of me, you know."

Agnes gasped; but, as before, Grace came swiftly to her rescue.

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself, Dicky Brentford!"

"Not at all! A doctor must protect himself from you ministering angels who load us poor human donkeys with packs belonging on the backs of others. You would keep us busy crossing off the charity lists you make for us, and so fill our time caring for your protégés that we must neglect our legitimate patients."

"Your reproof is justified; but this is something I cannot do," Agnes returned, sadly. "We must call on others and do for others, sometimes, whether contrary to our theories or not."

"Are facts reproofs?" In Brentford's tones was a mixture of badinage and bitterness.

"The keenest of all, sometimes. This man may die while we bandy words."

"Decency, if not charity, demands your attention here," Horace Vernon interrupted hotly.

"That for charity!" Brentford snapped his fingers contemptuously. "No fee, no prescription, I say! Isn't it time to be on the move? The soup will be cold."

"Leave the fee to me," conciliatingly, Mevin entered the lists. "Come on, old fellow, I know you'll help if we'll let you get at it after your own fashion."

"There you are right. It is the principle I look at—that of mortgaging the vitality of others on papers of your own making."

Nonchalantly, he swung from the coach and moved toward the house.

Out-distancing her companions, Agnes reached the house and, in response to her gentle rap, the woman she had seen at the bedside stood before her.

"'My son is sick! There is no breath left in him,'" came from her lips in quotation, unconscious and so natural, that Agnes felt transported from the rural New England village to the sorrowing household of the widow of Zarepath.

Dr. Brentford insisted that other medical services be obtained, and, to that end, Mevin went on to town, leaving Agnes and Mrs. Lavelle at the cottage. He soon returned with Dr. Bascombe, with whom Dr. Brentford remained in consultation before resigning the case into his hands. A nurse was not to be obtained till later in the evening, so Mrs. Lavelle remained with the exhausted mother, and Agnes, in the rosy light of the sunset, drove home with Mevin.

He gathered the reins in his hands and put the horse

to a gentle trot on the level road that preceded the steep descent some quarter of a mile beyond, while the stillness about them beat into his heart, in reiterant strain, the part she must forever bear in his life.

"I am wondering at, and glorying in, your perception," he said at length, as in apology for the silence he did not wish to break, so much more closely than words did it bring them together.

"My perception! Then have I gained ever so little in the Christ-consciousness!" There was a new light in her face as she turned to her companion.

"Tell me about those people!" Not at all understanding her remark, he looked deep into her eyes, longing, rather, to hear her voice, than to learn of the occupants of the house on the hillside. "The mother looks like a princess and the son like a vanquished Greek god."

"Their name is Herman."

At once, Agnes plunged intensely and emotionally into the history of the man and woman whose disaster had evoked her explanation. "The son is a minister and the illness a relapse of typhoid."

As she spoke, the conditions in the cottage gripped her, causing her to turn pale and tremble.

Mevin was in full and human sympathy with the suffering, but it was eclipsed in his heart by the supreme delight of having Agnes by his side.

They were high up on the hillside and seemed to float among the clouds. Entranced by the beauty about her, her sympathies were merged for the time in her joy, as the glories of nature rose supreme. Her eyes rested upon the changing phases of sun and cloud and rosy light, while Mevin's rested only upon her, whose face reflected the late afternoon's glow.

"Are you a castle-builder?" he said softly, "I am."

Dreamily he watched the curve of her ear and the

line where the lustrous hair met the white skin of her neck, reminding him of,—what?

“There is nothing to compare it with for beauty.” Thus meditating, he contended with his desire to touch the rose-leaf lobe of the dainty ear with a lover’s sign and seal.

“Indeed I am,” Agnes was responding. “I love to study structure and intend to build castles all my life.”

Her deep true eyes met his, unconscious of his adoration.

“All successes are the results of well-constructed castle building,” she continued, “whether of the little fruiterer arranging his many-colored fruits, or Phidias, dreaming into life the cold marble.”

Mevin scrutinized her. Surely his manner indicated interest in matters far more vital to him than these! Could it be possible she did not feel his adoration? To him it seemed “impanelled in fire.” Was she purposely ignoring it? Again, she was entrenched behind the impenetrable reserve he had encountered before. He closed his lips.

“I am stupid enough in expressing my heart’s desire, heaven knows; but the gayest Lothario would find it difficult to tell this spirit of air and fire and ice that he loves her! She is the most impossible and the most entrancing woman I have ever met. I will speak!” he soliloquized indignantly. “She shall not always make me dumb.”

“I want you to live in the castle of my life,” he was saying, but mischief was playing with his wooing, for as he spoke the horse shied. His entire attention was engaged in guiding her excited pace; nor could he quiet her, even as he drew her to a nervous standstill under the porte cochère.

“I am a cad!” he denounced himself, savagely, as he assisted his companion to alight. “I am forcing

upon her what she is doing her best to evade. She has even made this horse emissary against me."

This was strangely true though not intentional with Agnes. Conditions of fermentation overwhelmed her when on the verge of physical exhaustion or mental inharmony, and frequently made her suddenly as repellent and disturbing to persons and creatures, as, at other times, her poise attracted and made her helpful. As she watched Mevin out of sight, a drop fell on her hand though the sky was clear and bright.

Incredible though it seems, she had not sensed the purport of his words, nor realized that she had received a proposal of marriage and turned it aside so cavalierly that the ignoring was more final than a denial. Suddenly, she became aware of the change within herself that had reached Mevin some time before and which he had considered as a personal rebuff.

Through the porte cochère, the hills could be seen as in a frame, looking down upon the water, beyond the intervale, and below her, as she stood. The wind had risen, and was sending little moaning cries through the larches not far away. The late shadows of the long twilight were stealing onto the waters. She heard the caressing murmur of the breeze as it floated over the hills. The black cloud of depression was settling heavily upon her—the aftermath of a day of ecstasy—of joy as well as of pain. Only souls who have struggled as Agnes had done for years know the anguish and impotence of such moments—when all previous efforts seem futile and all attempts at construction to result only in tearing down.

"What holds me in its grip!" she almost screamed, as, like one crazed, she sped away from the house, her one thought and desire to be alone. A terrible dread of people overwhelmed her; a loathing of the afternoon's merriment; a ghastly acknowledgment of the

pitiful uselessness of companionship of which one expects so much but receives so little. Her head bowed, her chest sunken, her spine almost refusing her support, she went, now swiftly, as if driven by the lash of an inexorable taskmaster, now lagging, as from exhaustion.

"Why is all I do so futile!" she groaned. "Why are my enthusiasms succeeded by the depressions and tortures of the damned! Is this wracking agony primarily physical and nerve disturbance, or is my soul struggling for expression! When, crazed by loneliness, I long for human companionship, yet avoid it as I would a pestilence; yearn for friends' good morning, yet dread their greeting, is it inflammation of nerve fibre or the growth of the soul's manifestation! Is it that my soul *wills* to get at me by myself and will not be denied! I do not know! The sense of my inadequacy terrifies; my lack of potentiality appals."

She stopped a moment, then asserted positively,

"It is my soul striving to manifest and I *will* be equal to the demonstration. How superciliously Dr. Brentford looked at me this morning when I tried to lift his cynicism into the sunshine. It was as if I were a curio or a creature in the Zoo! And what he said this afternoon! Every word is truth. We, who account ourselves charitable, do make lists for others to minister to; promises for others to fulfil. We call on physicians to heal; on musicians to amuse or to instruct; on landlords to raise the load of rent; and consider that because we have discovered the cases we have performed the charity. Often we insult those who do not put their shoulder to our wheel, because they are lifting their own out of the sloughs."

She slipped on the hemlock needles but, quickly recovering,

"And I, tossed about by a power I can neither com-

prehend nor control—erratic, unbalanced, clutching at others to lay my bricks—and to fulfil the contracts I make—My God, dear God, help me or I perish!”

When she spoke again, there was a new quality in her voice.

“Teach me the balance of life, here and now! Here and now, or I shall never find it!” She clinched her hands and held her breath.

She had increased her pace almost to a run during this heart-breaking outcry; but by degrees, it slackened. The sunset still glowed in the west; the soft grays of the summer evening and gentle breeze that twilight brings to the New England woods and hills played tenderly about her.

“Agnes Landell, stand still!”

Instinctively, she obeyed her own command.

“Stand still!”

The sweet evening air floated about her. Involuntarily, she inbreathed its aroma and its tender comprehension. With it, came benediction.

“Stand still!” she repeated, not peremptorily, this time. “Close to the heart of life; not only believe; *know* you are divine and possessed of constructive power to make your environment. Be willing not to understand these upheavals within you. Leave it to the law of Growth to unfold it in its own good time. Breathe God’s breath in the universe. Move in harmony with Him who holds the spheres.”

For a moment, she was very still. Release, peace, pervaded her. She sat down on a bank becushioned with hemlock needles, drew from her bag a note-book and pencil and flashed these words to paper:—

“Transmute, transmute, past pain to present joy!
Refute, refute, what doubt and strain alloy!
Be strong, be strong, life’s meaning to translate!
Be swift, be swift, to act in God’s estate!”

She rose, and with these thoughts singing through her, walked slowly to their rhythm, until her whole being manifested, in every movement, this attainment of her soul's expression.

In her frenzy, she had walked fully a mile and a half, and now found herself in one of the most beautiful of the drives within her father's parks. Great hemlocks, shadowed by oncoming twilight, swept the ground, and the conscious inhaling of the balsamic odors quieted her physical senses. As she grew calm, she realized the approach of darkness and, moving swiftly out of the shadows of the park road, she crossed the stretch of upland, and soon was traversing the graveled driveway, spirit, soul, mind and body in harmony with the thought to which she moved.

"Bless that little backbone, so full of achievement! You show, in its every articulation, actual possession of the art of living!" A voice from the verandah she was approaching, made her peer into the gloom. Mrs. Lavelle was awaiting her, while the sound of wheels on the driveway was growing momentarily more faint.

"Louise Lavelle! Is that you? You do not know what your words mean to me! I left home an hour ago, a hunted thing, feeling that my soul was required of me and that I had deprived it of life through my physical inadequacies."

She paused before her friend.

"There in the stillness, alone in the woodlands, I lived in God; now, you tell me that the coöperation is discernible to outer sense."

"Agnes!" Tom, who had been watching for his sister, approached them from the house, his manner indicating his ever-bubbling humor.

"Come to dinner, this minute! If you are going to the hotel to-night, to tell those people how to amuse

themselves, on the uncomplimentary presumption that they haven't brains enough to know how for themselves, at least reinforce yourself. Jupiter, you would make a first-class manager of a Punch-and-Judy show. Already you arrange the figures; you will dance for them next. You do not obey my instructions worth a cent. Who is that with you?" peering through the gloom,—“Mrs. Lavelle, how you startled me! If there are any more mysterious happenings, I shall be afraid to trust the dark. First, Agnes discovers a strange house and a tragedy. Now, you, who were left on the bleak hillside of Mount Nodel, appear, without visible means of transportation, at Daniel Landell's mounting block!”

Mrs. Lavelle laughed.

“You need not institute psychical research on that account. I drove to town with the driver who took the nurse to the Hermans', and stopped here to retail the latest happenings.”

“Come in to dinner,—oh, you look like the rose of Sharon even if you have been picnicing,” invited Agnes. “Then, we'll go to the hotel together.”

“Yes, Mrs. Lavelle,” Tom continued his persiflage, as the family entered the dining-room a few moments later, “some of those people would die of ‘innocuous desuetude’ were it not for Agnes. There is that little Grace Herrick. They say she never puts on a stocking for herself, and, if her maid should disappear, nary a one would find place on milady's foot until Mirandy reappeared. She expects others to put on her mental stockings, too,—”

“I didn't have to put on any mental stockings for her the day she drove me into the lake,” laughed Agnes. “She has brains enough!”

“Then her grandmother and mother made her put them up in camphor along with her baby clothes.

Maybe, if brain ever comes into style, she may pull some of hers out, along with gold beads and coral necklaces. I return to my diagnosis of my sister's methods, Mrs. Lavelle. I claim it is immoral for her to use her vitality in doing for others what it is their business to do for themselves. She is a promoter of arrested development, and performs the same office for her lazy friends that the police in Central Park do for the squirrels. If the bluecoats don't appear with provender, Miss Squirrel starves because her house-keeping faculties have atrophied. Come, Miss Nutcracker, assume the responsibilities of these people; break down with the burden if you will; when you do, none will pity you. They will only say, 'Where are my nuts! That woman who always provides them is too much occupied with her own affairs, to think of me! Selfish creature! I should think she would be ashamed.' "

"You are quite right," laughed Mrs. Lavelle, "but as I seem to be one of the squirrels, do allow her to crack some nuts for us to-night."

CHAPTER VI.

"Soon, however, the social order takes its turn in self-assertion."

F. G. Peabody.

DINNER over, the three strolled through the summer night to the hotel, just as the dining-room was emptying on to its piazzas its be vies of well-gowned women and heterogeneously dressed men. Grace Herrick spied the newcomers through the vista of pine and hemlock.

"Here comes the Witch of Endor," she cried excitedly. "Tell us, Agnes, what else do you know that the rest of us cannot see! I declare, you've quite spoiled my appetite for dinner and we had pick-erel, too, fresh from the lake."

"What next is to be disposed of in your list of charities, Miss Landell?" Brentford settled himself effectively on a step at Agnes' feet.

"Shuck it, Brenty." Good-naturedly, Horace Vernon pushed the young physician along and sat beside him.

"My friend,"—indolently, Brentford turned and contemplated the speaker—"you are the individual, as I recall, who repudiated my attitude of self-preservation, this afternoon,—nearly went into kaleidoscopic fragments because I challenged the methods of certain good Samaritans. You sat in the seat of the scornful and squabbled; but I notice that not one finger of your magnificent hulk have you stirred toward *doing* anything. You did not clamber laboriously down from

the dizzy heights of yonder tally-ho at the risk of dislocating legs and arms; you did not, after accomplishing a perilous descent, drag your weary anatomy up the path,—”

“Cut it, Brentford, one would think you a brute, instead of a very fine fellow,” said Mevin, who had taken his stand behind Agnes.

“Dr. Brentford is right.” Vehemently, Agnes expressed her opinion. “I wish publicly to apologize for dragging him into an unwilling service. We are told to bear one another’s burdens; but that may not mean that we transfer our own, as I did, to other shoulders.”

“You cannot be a member in good and regular standing, Miss Landell, or you never would be so generous. The methods of the usual charity-monger are drastic. She exacts the pound of flesh and doesn’t notice if the victim squeals while losing it.”

“Don’t mind what Brentford says.” Mevin twisted a bit of paper and threw it at the handsome physician, perceiving that Agnes was unaccustomed to the fashion of thrusting truth into the tube of jest and ejecting it on to the palette of repartee. “The pound of flesh he gave in ministering to that Greek god on the hill, had none of his blood in it, rest assured.”

“Is he handsome?” Attracted by Mevin’s words, Grace Herrick bobbed up and down excitedly, in a manner peculiarly her own. “Tell us, Mr. Mevin! That horrid Dicky Brentford will do nothing but jeer. If he means what he says, he shows very bad taste; if he does not, he shows worse.”

“I do mean it,” said Brentford, testily. “I despise charity and all its concomitants. Bah! I know what I’m talking about! The best parlors of my various aunts and uncles were decorated with certificates of membership to philanthropic societies; but I know very

well they indulged in the sweating process toward their washerwomen."

"Have a memory for pleasanter things, pessimist."

"That's all very well, Mevin; but a doughnut has a hole as well as that which is edible."

"Not the 'sort my mother makes,' " laughed Vernon, "she has crullers and cuts out the hole."

"In that case, you are not obliged to think as I do. To return to my theme, which I consider most illuminating,—The most charitable person I know—with others' time and money—borrows my carefully annotated books (or takes them from my office without permission) and refuses to return them, because she likes the notes, no matter how I plead their importance to myself. She will send me new copies, she tells me, but not mine! She borrows every book she reads, though amply able to buy, and baptizes it with sandwiches or toffee as is most convenient. She declares that morality will not save, so I suppose she considers the practice of it in daily matters unnecessary. Yes, Miss Herrick, Herman is a stunning looking fellow. Lucky for you, Vernon, that he is out of the running at present. I wouldn't answer for Miss Herrick's keeping her engagement with you if she had seen him—"

"Is he poor? Is he going to get well?" Grace's excitement grew more keen.

"Poor! They look like silver kings trying the simple life. Is he going to get well? Ask Miss Landell. She is the one who looks into the future."

"Yes, they are poor," sighed Agnes. "I want to suggest some means of helping them, but hesitate before the truth, Dr. Brentford—"

"Me? Oh, my remarks are not personal. They are general diatribes directed toward the Hydra, Charity, with its millions of leeching arms! Tell us your

scheme. It is sure to bring us pleasure and that is the sole aim of life."

"What do you think of holding a festival in the dining-hall. We picked a good deal of fruit this afternoon. Perhaps the preserve-makers in the village may as willingly buy of us as of the berry-pickers,—"

"And the small boys of the town, who, for weeks, depend on berry-picking to help the pot boil, will find themselves robbed of custom and decide they might as well become hoboos as workmen, if to charity is to belong the spoils."

"You make my heart ache, all you say is so true!" sighed Agnes.

"Dicky Brentford, stop making Agnes unhappy, and thank your stars for something to do in this sleepy place." Grace was all interest. "She can't help it because Peter and Paul are always robbing each other. I don't know why we need worry. If Peter isn't the thief, Paul is sure to be, and Paul is only waiting his chance to go Peter one better. Let's have the festival."

"I second the motion, because I shall get some fun out of it, which statement is honest if not charitable. Truly, it is a strange situation, that of those two splendid looking specimens of humanity destitute on a lonely hillside, in a house which looks more like a millionaire's shooting box than a poor farm."

"There must be something more juicy than huckleberries to insure success," said Grace Herrick's fiancé.

"Of course, Horace. We must have something stunning." Again Grace bobbed up and down with her funny little excitable movement. "I know,—Agnes—give us that wonderful evening of yours,—you know—that you were reciting to me the other day,—Judith! You are positively great in that dance you make her give before Holofernes. Do!"

In an instant, there was a hubbub of entreaty.

At first, impressed in her own mind, that, under existing circumstances she should not give the strength she knew she did not possess, and shrinking from the incongruity of presenting the interpretation in connection with a dance and festival, the babel of voices overwhelmed her intelligence and inhibited it with the confusion that ensued. Her mentality began to toss its shuttle to and fro in the warp and woof of others' opinions and the threads became hopelessly entangled. Though she seemed outwardly composed, this mental condition was quickly sensed by the importuners. They brought more threads of entreaty to the factory of her mind and the whirring of the vari-sized spindles of indecision grew more confounding. Only Mevin stood apart, silent.

"Of course you will! You never refuse to do anything for the good of others!" insisted Grace.

"I would give Judith,—” Her eyes filled with tears which she smiled bravely away. "You know Alicia always did the singing,—the oratorio part,—while I did the dramatic part."

"Do it, Agnes! Just because some one has died, you can't shut yourself up behind that for the rest of your life."

The very lack of sentiment made Grace's thrust endurable. It cut Agnes to the heart but left upon her mind only the thought of Grace's crudity, which appealed to her keen sense of humor and deflected the attack.

"It will make you feel so happy to know you are doing for others," said Bernice Holbrook, who, throughout the conversation had sat rocking languorously.

"You are quite right," responded Agnes. "I have kept in practice and I should do it. It will need the music. I can arrange for the instrumental part. My

pianist is a busy man; but I will pay him well,—but,—the singing,—”

“Do it yourself, Agnes. There are only three selections, as I recall the presentation,—that magnificent, ‘Upon the Ramparts of Bethulia’, and the lullaby, and the oratorio aria with recitative, ‘Ho Ye Upon the Walls.’”

“It isn’t the quantity, it’s the quality,” said Agnes, wanly. “If I do it, it won’t be like Alicia. I have no such singing voice. She was wonderful. I can sing it after a fashion; but it won’t be divine. She was divine.”

“You are superb in the oratory, Miss Landell, and, be assured, far better in song than you yourself believe,” said Mevin, breaking his silence.

“I can’t imagine you other than divine in anything you undertake. Certainly, if you can pierce creosote shingles to see things, you can troll out notes to hypnotize angels, to say nothing of a Beneby audience,” said Dr. Brentford.

“Then I will undertake it. I have sung the selections often, at home,—since Alicia died,—couldn’t,” she changed the word hastily. “There will be so little time to advertise, I will see what I can do, now, by telephone.”

“A personal appeal, by all means,” Brentford continued his ironical repartee.

“Oh, oh,” groaned Tom. “If that is your plan, get at it at once, and then come on home to rest up for the ordeal.”

“Obeying your brother!” Brentford’s voice followed Agnes to the telephone. “Yet, liberty is elevated aloft in the guise of a woman.”

“A correct one in this case,” and Agnes, sparkling with the elation awakened at the thought of personal endeavor, together with a sort of sacrificial ecstasy,

because she was to be of service, gave her Roland for Brentford's Oliver in a manner positively entrancing: "Liberty never oppresses individuals and I see that Tom really wants to go."

"It is only fair to admit that woman is a goddess, since the House of Lords has decreed she is not a person," was Brentford's parting shot.

After some effective telephoning, Mevin conducted Agnes to the foot of the steps, feeling his way toward walking home with her. At first, he had feared lest the events of the afternoon should affect the ease of their relations; but so oblivious had she been to his love-making that he found not an eddy in the smoothness of their intercourse; and he vowed, inwardly, that, as far as he was concerned, so should it remain, until he could see broad plains of assurance whence, in loving measure, might flow the waters of their friendship, rising above the banks of simple comradeship, and moving steadily on to the all-including ocean of love.

Meanwhile, Tom had walked ahead, and together Agnes and Mevin went down the long, silent avenue, redolent with pines and the soft dews of evening.

"How bitter Brentford is!"

Mevin broke the silence as they entered the main road leading to the Landells'. "I wonder what tragedy lurks behind it! Were there not an inherent fineness in the man, he would be insufferable."

"Every word he says is true from one aspect," said Agnes, vehemently. "Practised without regard to the inevitable law of compensation, charity is a big leech, and I am one of its jaws. Suddenly, I decide I should act for the good of others. When I get into more than I can manage, some one, with hands already full, has to come to my rescue. My mother taught me better than that; but I fail to act on her teachings, and fall back on my own emotionalism and Aunt Luella's train-

ing, that we are very much like food thrown to beasts, to be torn asunder for others' needs or pleasure."

"What did your mother teach you?" As he looked into her deep, true, earnest eyes Mevin could not, try as he would, keep the tenderness from stealing into his tones.

"Some one asked me if she would give a cake to a charitable festival. All enthusiasm, I replied in the affirmative. What was my distress when, instead of giving me the cake, she made me report that I had no right to make obligations for others and for that reason the cake was not to be forthcoming."

"A severe lesson for a little girl."

"A good one. If only, I would apply it constantly, instead of intermittently. My childhood's teachings were a strange medley and my attempts to relate them have been the puzzle of my life. Through my aunt, I read in the law that we are worms of the dust, our salvation depending on our utter helplessness and an attitude of holding our mouths open like young sparrows for the Most Generous God to throw down food according to His gracious pleasure; the next moment, my mother taught me that a man reaps exactly what he sows, and is morally accountable to himself and those about him for every move he makes. Only recently has come to me the revelation that life constantly manifests in growth and that the spark of deity within us is the life that grows to its own prototype."

Mevin meditated. He wanted to discuss the question; but more, did he wish to hear her talk, so instead he questioned her.

"Why has the struggle been so great? You seem to have so much to make you happy."

"In order to help, I have trained myself to suffer with those who suffer."

"Is not that morbid?"

A quality of tender protectiveness softened the words and reduced within her the sense of torture she was beginning to feel as she entered into the spirit of her recital.

"I do not know. I believe it is necessary to the understanding of humanity. I feel that until I quiver with every heart I shall be made to suffer. I had two little brothers and a baby sister whom I dearly loved. They died, so my Aunt Luella told me. Oh, if they had only taken me out in the little canoe, on the still waters, under the blue of the heavens; moving, almost without motion, through green pastures, and let me lie there, looking into the life of the waters, the life of the sky, the life of the trees, then, little by little, the heart of life would have beat, steadily and sturdily, into my numbed and frightened heart, and won it into a larger life than I had ever known before. I should have gone home, and gone on in life, awake to the truth that the babies were not dead, but more alive and closer to the aspirations and the heart of me, than they were before."

"Did not your father and mother teach you this? They seem like ones who would."

"My mother was dangerously ill at this crucial time in my life. I was placed with my Aunt Luella—at first I seemed in no one's care at all. While my father was hovering over the seeming death-bed of my mother, and Tom and Alicia were removed from the scene by neighbors, I was wandering about the house seeking for an opportunity to help in what I knew to be a tragic situation. I was seeking for the little ones. They had taken them away and I could not find them.

"Puzzled at the strange, hushed bustle, so unlike the usual atmosphere of the home, I came to the east guest chamber. Its door was not quite closed and I pushed it open and entered,—oh,—" she staggered;

but was upheld by Mevin's supporting arm. "There were the babies, stark and unclothed,—surrounded—by men—at the embalmer's trade. It was instilled into me in horror, and distilled into my life in consternation."

Mevin clasped her hand. His strength upheld her. She went on.

"I did not cry. I knew my mother's life depended upon quiet. I spoke to no one. I never have spoken, and never intended to speak; but you, in your sympathy—and thinking of Alicia,—oh, how can I go on to-morrow night without Alicia,—you know,—the sister,—who died two years ago?"

"I know," he replied, tenderly. "When you think of her, and the babies, can you not remember just what you have told me you longed to have said to you? Know you would not think about them unless the souls of them were thinking of the soul of you. Instead of sinking under the weight of loss and separation, think, at once, 'Here are my loved ones speaking to the soul of me. What matter if I do not see them with these eyes that see, after all, so crudely. I can know they are with me in thought and in aspiration. I can be sure that their beautiful embodiments are fitting garments for the qualities they possess and express.'"

"So uniting the unseen with the seen in every tenderness I can bestow on those about me?" She stopped and looked at him with beseeching questioning.

"Yes. Daily, there will come to you more clearly the knowledge that their souls are responding to and encouraging yours. Establish the habit of realizing this unity of life, even as you believe it. Let all speak to you of a greater life. Never think of them as dead."

Agnes turned and looked at him earnestly and reverently.

"You!" She paused upon the word with tender

sweetness. "You! A man who does not believe in prayer? Oh, no! Your words, *you, yourself*, disprove the statement."

"I? Oh, I've followed pretty much my own plan since I was ten years old, when with clenched fists and choking throat, I listened to the description of a God of vengeance, who, in infinite justice and mercy, repented the wholesale condemnation of which He had been guilty,—which is nothing less than the anger we are blamed for exhibiting, when things do not go our way. Then, He sent His Only Begotten Son,—for, by this time, He had even disavowed having any other children—excepting by adoption—to be scourged and crucified as a penalty for something He had not done. This enabled some of the outcasts to return, relieved of the consequences—not of what they had elected to do, but what they had been forced into. I had convulsions that night. The doctor said it was from eating green apples. Faugh! It was from terror and indignation."

"I have had convulsions, too," said Agnes gently. "But such statements seem so palpably the results of sleeping consciousness, that I have not repudiated, I have prayed, nightly—ceaselessly—for light, more light."

"I have been shy of avowed love and mercy ever since, and have cut loose from things religious, pretty much. It is an easy thing He did," he continued bitterly. "He followed one injustice with a worse one. He *loved!* so hard He sacrificed a loved one. Why? According to the pulpits, it was a sop to the Cerberus of his own remorse. He was sorry! As if that ever corrected anything! It is the same idea of love as the cellular attraction, rampant among those men and women who, under its name, tumble children into the

world to suffer. Love! Four letters! I beg your pardon! Can you ever forgive me?"

"We are of a God-race, seeking our heritage, Truth, Mr. Mevin." She looked at him with angelic womanliness. "Where shall we find nobler help than reverent searching, women with men. Yes, until this awakening age, lust is the conception the world has had of love; but search the Bible; watch the evolution of history, see therein how the essence of love nourishes our understanding. As we move out of ancient forms of religion, may we grow in appreciation of its reality. Such men as you are needed to reveal it to the world."

"I must manifest what I am, whether I intend to or not. As for charity," after a moment's pondering, reverting to the original topic, "'Charity should mean justice instead of generosity; work, instead of alms.' It always puzzles me, though, when I see a case like these protégés of yours. How it must cut them to the heart to be thus publicly advertised."

The comradeship with which Agnes had entered with him upon the mighty matters of life was suddenly obscured. An impenetrable reserve encased her. Though she continued to talk, no longer was there communion.

Wounded by the seeming fickleness of this woman whom he believed to be superior to coquetry, Mevin's replies became platitudes. He was not sorry to leave her, and by himself to puzzle over the mystery of her powerful attraction and repulsion.

When Agnes entered the library, she found Tom poring over a heavy volume. He looked up with a comical expression.

"Have you heard from your rhetoric queen? You look as if you had."

"No, and, as next best, I'm studying her habitat in the Gazetteer. What is the matter? You look as if

you had committed murder! When I left you, you were as happy as a bird."

"What have I done!" Agnes sank into a chair and covered her face with her hands. "What have I done!"

"Just what I want to know."

"I have dragged those gentlepeople into the lime-light. As I now see it, the whole story could have been kept within the knowledge of the few."

"You are working yourself into one of your attacks. If you wish to do as badly or worse next time, poison your blood, muddle your brain and wrack your nerves with that fiendish pill, self-condemnation. Truth is never recognized by a puzzled brain."

"Why do I make such a mix-up when I try to be kind!"

"You try too confounded hard to include everybody. You remind me of a woman who, to support another one, bought home-made wines of her and sent them to a family of toppers the town was trying to reclaim."

"What can I do!"

"The one who works the threads of helpfulness through other lives, needs the strong bodkin of common sense to pull them through, successfully. You have lots of supersense; but I sometimes think it would pay you to lay it aside and just be ordinary. See what you can with your eyes and no more,—"

"What eyes?"

"You have asked me that before. These eyes! Not one in the middle of the skull or back in the brain. I tell you, you are treading on dangerous ground, trying to grasp so much truth. You don't know how comfortable it is to be commonplace. It relieves one of an awful pressure. What earthly reason had you to draw the thread of your helpfulness to the Hermans, through the plan of entertaining those hotel

people, especially by undertaking that tremendous Judith? It seems to me that the crux of the matter is that you allow others to make your decisions for you—”

“It looks so obstinate—”

“Obstinate or not, I should refuse to do what is not traceable to your own intelligence. Even if good ones, the ideas of others should not be entertained until the suggestion is subjected to your own decision. Good nature or indecision are easy paths to the horrors of possession by others of our integrity, and even to the terrors of hypnotism. Don't dear, put on that look of 'Thy will be done,' as if it were to be the worst possible! Are you going to have an attack, Cherum, Cheree?”

“I think not. I am improving,—do say you think I am! I have so long supposed I ought to do for everybody, and condemned myself, even if I find nothing to condemn myself for, that 'I have the habit.' I hope Mattee Sue will answer your letter, and that you will always win your heart's desire, not because you are more fortunate than some; but because of your well-directed conscious choice.”

CHAPTER VII.

*With my heart's blood I write my life's song;
And because it is my heart's blood, there is life in
my song;
And because there is life in my song
Behold, there is new blood in my heart;
For I live anew in the giving forth of life.*

THE next morning found Agnes practising her part for the evening. Hearing his sister's clear and beautiful voice, Tom came to the door of the music-room.

"I know I should not practise the day I am to appear; but I must, just a little," she said, apologetically. "I am going to rest afterwards. I shall run down to the village and urge the people to swell the fund. I must put the case strongly to get anything, you know. Then I shall take a look—only a look—at Cousin Matilda. She disturbed me again last night. My physical presence seems to worry her; but she keeps my room fairly buzzing with her mental activity. If only my going to her did some good! But no, she seems to cling to me with her mind and to care practically nothing about me after she gets me within physical reach. I don't understand."

Tom looked thoughtful and went to his train.

In a short time, Agnes left the house. After she had spread her news to her satisfaction she was thoroughly exhausted; but, true to her promise, she went to Miss Bolden's.

"I am so glad to see you," Cousin Matilda greeted her visitor benignly, "I have been looking for you all

the morning. To us who rise with the dawn, this hour of the forenoon seems nearly nightfall, when no man works. Still, I felt sure that if I waited long enough, you would drop in. I wish you to remain to luncheon with me, then we will—”

“I am so sorry; but I cannot, this afternoon. You see, we are to have this big entertainment in aid of the—” and she poured forth the tale of the Hermans’ disasters to which Miss Bolden listened with keen interest. “Now I will run on. I have several matters to attend to, and I must give at least an hour to my toilette—”

“I notice,” was the curt response, “that you are growing altogether too fond of dress. Were I you, I would curb that vanity.”

“Why, Cousin Matilda, last winter you fairly scolded me for paying so little attention to my personal appearance,” was Agnes’ response, in hurt surprise. “Since then, I have tried to reform.”

“That is quite right—I hope I shall have the pleasure of hearing you, to-night. Of course, if you will make so many engagements that you can spare me no time, I must, I suppose, submit.”

“Father will send the car for you early.” Bidding Matilda good-bye, Agnes, her vitality oozing from her as a result of this acrid conversation, made a hurried trip to the hotel to see about platform arrangements, and by noon she was at home. After a light lunch she went to her room to rest. No sooner had her head touched the pillow, however, than she recalled that she had not written to her Aunt Luella for a week. As she was sealing the envelope, the receipt of a bill through the mail recalled that the first of the month was at hand and she had not made up her accounts, so she plunged into the maze. There was her usual difficulty in making two and two spell four, as she

expressed it, and dusk halted her mathematical activities and curtailed the hour for dressing. She was obliged to hurry her toilette that she might be ready for the entertainment which was to begin at country hours. The pines and hemlocks were already aglow with sparkling lights, twinkling in and about the green.

By half after seven, the townspeople came thronging to the hotel, for Agnes Landell was wonderful in her interpretation and not since the sudden translation of the lamented Alicia, had she favored the public with her expression. By eight, the hall was filled. As on the shores of the Euphrates, the clangor of brass and the iron of arms, together with the clashing of steel, the neighing of horses, and the roar of demonism as the hosts of Holofernes prepared for battle made itself felt through the instrumentation of the pianist, heralding the theme of the evening.

Then Agnes entered.

Respecting her wish that no applause interfere with the mental picture presented through the music, her audience greeted her in a silence vibrant with concentrated power.

Rather with her mind than with her eyes, she swept the audience, reaching out and drawing them to herself in support and coöperation, shrinking from those whose armor of criticism repelled. There was Tom,—always her helper; her father,—always an inspiration; her mother,—before whom she trembled a little, she knew not why; Grace, who amused her, even in anticipation of her bizarre remarks which appealed to her humor more than to her emotions, they were generally so apt, even if uncomplimentary. There was Mevin,—what peace, what protection enfolded her as she looked at him. There was Dr. Brentford,—she felt rather sure of his support,—and there, almost in the front seat, was Alicia's singing teacher,—a remarkable

woman. Alicia! Alicia! The battle-songs of the infamous hosts of Holofernes! The hills of Arabia! The waters of the Euphrates! Judith, the Jewish Mary, saviour of her race! The New England faces faded quite away and Agnes, as Judith, trod the plains of Esdrælon, with salvation for her people. Step by step, in the flowing rhythm of Aldrich's poesy, she lived that tragedy; threading her way through mystic dance into the presence of the drunken Holofernes in his tent. Like the ebb and flow of moonlight, she swayed to the weird Assyrian chant that drank in the grape-laden elixir of the Assyrian night.

In poetry and song, she had borne the burden of the narrative; the intense description of the invading hosts; the characterizations of the besotted Holofernes, and the Judith of the ages. She had lulled the monster to his death-sleep—when her throat was clutched with a demoniacal violence and into her open mouth a palpable *something* began to force its way.

"I am Alicia!" it said, "I am Alicia."

"Alicia would never do such a thing," returned Agnes' soul, with firm insistence, her whole being gripped in the claws of the unseen horror.

"I am Alicia!" The invisible hands clutched her tighter, till her every physical, mental and emotional nerve and muscle were engaged in the warfare of her soul against this effort to rape the integrity of her individuality—and there was the audience, uncomprehending the great drama behind, waiting, watching, listening to the tale she was bearing to completion. Grappling, life to life, with this creature of obsession, still there was no halt in the lines, no blur in the picture. While every part of her was engaged in conquering in this dreadful fight, her artistic sense utilized even the strangling that was now almost suffocation. Pantingly, and with physical agony, she forced her

breath to speech, while, keenly alert, she watched the effect upon her audience of this unrecognized battle being waged before them. With physical as well as spiritual strength, she was combatting an enemy deadlier to her than was Holofernes to Judith. Struggling, panting, denying entrance to this discarnate horror that was fighting to the death to overwhelm and control her, she battled physically, with breath and arms, mentally searching a way out, and with all the strength of her spirit, calling, God! But she was nearly exhausted, her breath almost gone. She felt her limbs giving way.

"God! God!" she cried, while the text flowed smoothly on.

Of this soul struggle raging before them, the audience saw nothing. They were enthralled with the majesty of the portrayal.

Steadily, as to outward appearance; more and more haltingly as to her failing forces, she approached the words by which—Judith having slain the king—Bagoas summons the watchers on the ramparts. As she reached this climax, with one more desperate struggle, she threw out both her arms repellingly, putting from her all but space and air and freedom and God. With an internal shout of supremacy,—a great loud cry to the Intelligence protecting her against this dreadful thing—she knew not what to call it—she attained the next stage in the double drama she was enacting.

Her voice sent forth a message! It rang, as through a trumpet, thrilling the dullest listener there,—

" 'He is dead!

The Prince is dead! The Hebrew witch hath slain
Prince Holofernes! Fly, Assyrians, Fly! ' "

This was what the people heard; but cringing back

unto its own place, the vampire of her soul heard her proclaim, "Begone!" To God and herself she stood there, triumphant in her conquest for the integrity of her soul's expression. To the audience, she was Agnes, with histrionic skill, portraying the redemption of Judea.

Then, there came a great peace. The fingers on her throat relaxed. Pure air replaced the sulphurous fumes she had been inhaling; but she was bereft of strength, breathless! Soon, however, the rhythm of her pulse began to be established. Skillfully, and prayerfully, she gathered her faculties entirely within the jurisdiction of her own intelligence and emotions, and brought the poem to its end.

A tempest of applause succeeded the finale, and Agnes went down among her friends, collected, even seeming cold. She was still on the platform steps when two human arms clutched her with fierce tenderness, and Alicia's singing-teacher whispered hoarsely,

"Agnes, I saw your sister in you, every minute!"

Agnes staggered at the import of this confession even as the speaker was swept aside by oncoming friends and the evening passed to a triumphant close.

CHAPTER VIII.

"I cannot hear what you say for listening to what you are."

Emerson.

IN the gray dawn, Agnes struggled from a lethargic slumber back to the life of day. A wild contention of demands surged through her. She tossed and turned, then rose and wrote letter after letter until eight o'clock. By that time she was in agony with the intense pain of a headache. Forcing her nerves past nature's call for rest, she dressed and went the length of the long avenue to the post box. The sunlight shot into her burning eyeballs, but she was even more determined than she would have been if well to call no one away from duties to mail her letters. She had reached the box and was about to insert the envelopes, when all turned black before her. She sank in a little heap by the big stone gate-posts, where glory of vine and bloom partially concealed her. Semi-conscious, but unequal to moving, and determined not to call for assistance, she sat there for some time. Then her eyes opened dreamily and she scanned the long length of sunshine which, to her, seemed as terrible as a furnace.

While striving to summon courage to move from out the shadow, constantly stealing more and more of its protection from her as the sun found its way into the interstices of the shrubbery, she heard Tom's whistle, as he came up fresh from a swim.

"What are you doing?" he said cheerily, then

stopped in astonishment. "You look like a burglar lying in wait for the family to go picnicing."

Agnes burst into tears.

"You always do joke so! Can't you see I am in agony!"

"You do look awfully used up; but if you feel as bad as you look, why aren't you in bed, instead of an eighth of a mile from home hatless in this blazing sunshine?"

"I had to mail these letters." She held them toward him. "I've written these this morning."

"Twelve!" Taking the letters, he counted them as he posted them. "You had to write these, I suppose! No matter how much last night's junketting took out of you! You are as intemperate as Tiger Thompson in Pride's Alley. You have been on an emotional spree for a week, and now come delirium tremens, and like most *tremenites* you don't know enough to stay home. You couldn't possibly have waited, or called some one to mail them?"

"I didn't want to trouble any one."

"You would never feel that way about it if you were not wound up to the top notch of nerves. You can't borrow vitality, dear."

"I will not be selfish. I will not notice my feelings!"

"And then, you won't have any? Feelings are signals of processes. If you inhibit them, you don't inhibit the processes and you will soon find that out."

"Perhaps I can reach the house, now. I want to get up a basket of fruit for Mrs. Tula and some provisions for Mrs. Meezer—"

"One of them lives by the sea in the east,
One of them lives in the west, by the sea,"

sang Tom. "Do any of your protégés, by any chance,

live near each other? Did you happen to recall, when you got up to write all these letters, that you had given your moral note to mother, to receive with her this afternoon and make her tea a booming success? Is that promise to pay going to protest, because you have applied your strength in directions other than agreed upon?"

He caught his sister as she was about to fall, and stopped contritely, sure he was right, but grieved at her condition.

"Go to bed, Cherum, Cheree, and I will see you through,—and, from the selfishness of unselfish people, 'Good Lord, deliver me,'" he finished, under his breath.

He had assisted her to her room and was about to leave her when she handed him a newspaper she had picked up by the gateway; but had not opened.

"This belongs to the chauffeur. Will you see that he gets it? I wish such sensationalism need not come to our doors,—oh, I've dropped it."

Tom caught the paper as it fell, and it opened, displaying to his astounded gaze a picture of Agnes on the front page.

"Is this you!" he exclaimed.

Agnes quickly snatched the sheet and looked at the page intensely.

"What is it!" she gasped. "Tom! Tom!"

With trembling finger, she pointed to the headlines above the photograph. Tom read aloud,

"'A snapshot of a New England seer, possessed of marvelous powers. * * * Discovers in a beautiful deserted house, Mrs. David Herman and her son, Philip. These are the millionaires who mystified society some time ago, by their strange disappearance.'"

"Another headline," she groaned. "Stop, Tom, stop!"

“ ‘When found,’ ” pursued Tom, relentlessly, “ ‘they were in a destitute and starving condition—’ ”

“ ‘Another!’ ” she quivered, looking over his shoulder, fearing to hear the succeeding lines. At the same time an intense desire to know the worst, impelled her to listen.

“ ‘Proceeds of the great huckleberry festival to be nucleus of a fund for their support—’ ”

“ ‘What shall I do!’ ”

“ ‘It goes on,—’ At last, the world’s curiosity is satisfied by news of their safety. The establishing of a fund, by this brilliant society belle, to help this worthy couple—’ ”

“ ‘Will it never end?’ ”

“ ‘Another headline.—’ A call is made to all the charitably inclined, far and near, to join this worthy cause. Send pennies, dimes, quarters—’ so it goes on, ad infinitum.”

“ ‘What have I done!’ ”

Tom concealed his feelings and soothed his sister as best he could; but when at last he left her, she still clutched the paper, which, at intervals, she reverted to, and mourned over.

In a few moments he was in the breakfast room.

“ ‘I wonder if Agnes is coming soon,’ ” Mrs. Landell looked past her son questioningly.

“ ‘No, mother, she is paying the penalty of philanthropic dissipation,’ ” he returned, bitterly. “ ‘It was all very beautiful for her to find that family; but what an exposé she has made for them. She has used them to turn out entertainment for others. Don’t tell me a pure motive is all that is needed in the climb of attainment! Intelligence, discernment, and discrimination well mulsi-fied and made up into a dressing called common sense is the sauce to serve with the salad of

life." He retailed the circumstance over which Agnes was grieving up-stairs.

"I lecture her about indiscriminate use of self until I am ashamed. 'We can't detach the individual from the world; but we must learn to realize personality in terms of the common good.' "

Mr. Landell looked meditatively at his son.

"A while ago," he said, "for the very purpose of observing differences in the processes of their growth, a religious publication desired to come into relations with young persons, some trained in the dogma of the theologians and some in the moral and spiritual idea that the acquisition of Truth is an unfolding process. In a way, you and Agnes would meet the requirements well."

"Wherein do you consider that we have not been brought up alike? Do you refer to the processes of reincarnation?"

"I do not accept that theory as do many. I believe, not so much in repeated earth reincarnations as in soul growth. They who accept that explanation, seem to me to lack imagination. There are other ways of learning than through repetition and other bounds of advancement than this little earth. I start with the premise that you and she appeared at this earth stage, having attained different stages of soul growth. Your unfoldment is less than hers, but more sequential. Since you were put into harness here you have had uninterrupted training, which promotes a certain habit of mind and principle of conduct. Approaching life reverently, independently and personally, you have been related with real sources of power, rather than with the machinery of dogma."

"I feel the truth of that most gratefully."

"You have never, in order to be true to a cause, been placed in the position of maintaining an attitude

of mind which your soul repudiates as unwholesome, unhelpful and unintelligent, thus poisoning your manifestation with secretions that insincerity, whether intentional or not, causes to accumulate.

"Agnes' training has been less sequential. Now, transcendently happy at what her spiritual illumination has granted her, again, she is torn by agonies of doubt as to the wisdom of the tenets she believes she should accept. She stands in the midst of crudities which are loathsome to her, but do not distress you, because, what she sees as retrogression you see as progression. She constantly depreciates herself as less than she has been in some previous state; you constantly appreciate yourself as more to-day than you were yesterday."

"You diagnose her well. I hope I am as fine as you make me sound. How fortunate that in all the cataclysms of earlier days I was allowed to remain with you two splendid ones." Tom looked lovingly at his mother sitting stately and beautiful behind the urn. "So the difference in our beginnings here may be summed up in this—I recognize the ascent of man; she long has mourned his fall!

"I am glad I took up psychurgy, together with medicine. It is thoroughly constructive," he continued. "I am glad, too, that I had that splendid course in mathematics. It holds so clearly before me the principle of One. Do you think it possible for me to help Agnes, without interfering with her business of proving her own propositions? As I read you, she and I are rather near each other, at times, as we move on different arcs of the circle of life."

"I think it a good idea. While you, with your practical common sense, may assist her to discriminate, she, with her spiritual idealism, may help you to your vi-

sion. Remember, through it all, that time is not an element necessary to growth of soul. Recognition is."

For some days after this experience, Agnes lay in almost a comatose state, taking little nourishment, rousing herself, at intervals, to bemoan her horrible error, then sinking, again, into the condition, not of lethargy, but of peace.

"She is wholly exhausted," she heard her mother whisper, the first day. "Don't you think, Daniel, she should have stimulant?"

"I am over-stimulated, now, dear mother," she had roused herself to say. "I am not ill. I am being infilled with the Spirit of Truth. If only Peter and John will watch over me, and not weary nor grow faint."

At another time, she called for pencil and paper, and requested to be left alone. After hours of peace, would come the transcribing of a poem, or aphorism, then rest, again.

"Watch over me," she said. "Keep from me, what is not trained toward the highest and best. I must remain in this well of divine restfulness until I have discerned my message. Each time I have what some call nervous prostration, I return to the life of the to-day like a mother after travail with child. It may be I express creation through a poem, a tale, a new correlation and perception of former understandings; but it is a child—myself, maybe—being born again."

One day, on the edge of the evening, she returned to her old sense of compulsion and hurtling demand. The whole world seemed holding out its hands for help that she alone could give.

"I am afraid!" she gasped. "Afraid!"

Rising, she went to the window. Cool night was

settling down. The restfulness of twilight brooded over her, and soothed, though it could not dispel. Her brain cried out for release from its dreadful pressure and the old dominance impelled her.

"I must attain," she said intensely. "We are put here to work."

Going to her desk, she took out a manuscript. With a tension that jarred her entire physique, she began crossing out and adding, until the sheets were masses of hieroglyphics. She failed to note that the door was opening, until Tom's voice startled her.

"Boozing again, Agnesia, and pounding away as if that pen were a mallet and the paper, stone. So dark, too, that you have to feel your way. Why don't you think, before you use your physical strength transcribing!"

Whimsically, Agnes looked up at her brother, her face alight.

"You know I must see Truth *grow*. I love to see it shape out of débris new forms of beauty."

"I don't,—after that fashion!"

Decisively, he took the manuscript from her hands.

"I want a conceived idea; a clear sheet; a sharp pencil; then, forge ahead."

"I see too much at once to do that!"

"I know it. Realms open up their treasures to you; but, if you don't select, you will end by utilizing none of them."

"I realize that, and, in this resting time, I have felt as if I were a Christ in embryo, out on the hillside with the Infinite Father, protected, by those about me, from conflict. I have made up my mind to follow more attentively some of the beautiful aphorisms I am so capable of expressing in word and fall so far short of demonstrating in action."

"So you think the negative has been in the dark

room long enough to be ready for the developing process?"

"Yes, I do. Matilda, stop!"

Tom looked intently at his sister and laughed.

"You might work on that notion—"

"It is not a notion. I proved that to you the other night."

"A coincidence. Nothing more. I thought so, then; but did not wish to excite you by discussion. Look out!"

"I could prove it as I did the other time; but I suppose it would not be proof to you. I agree, though, that it is a very wise way to treat it,—as a notion. Matilda!" she spoke into the air, "I love you; but it is my right that you send me messages in such manner as shall give us both pleasure and unify your purpose of receiving with mine of giving."

"Good! I am glad to hear you say that!"

Agnes looked happy.

"Besides, I have selected something from all the whirl that is in my brain. I want to put you and Mattee Sue into my story. I wish I had more material."

"I can give you some. She did answer my letter, after all!"

With an amusing air of satisfaction, he drew an envelope from his pocket. Ostentatiously opening the missive, he read it with mock impressiveness.

"I call that perfectly dear," she commented, as he folded the paper.

"I call it immensely jolly!" and he tossed it to her, humming,

"My Mattee Sue, my Mattee Sue,
How I shall aye adore thee!
My heart did beat
Like tripping feet,
For fear that thou would'st scorn me!

"I'll tell cook to send you a fine dinner, and mind you marry me to Mattee Sue!"

He swung out of the room, leaving a feeling of lightheartedness and splendid virility behind him, continuing his impromptu serenade to his distant goddess,

"But now I read
Thy kindly screed,
I feel a trifle safer,
So take my pen
To write again,
With speed of auto-racer!"

"Is the difference between us in our temperaments or in our training, and how much has one to do with the other?"

Then, her mind played happily and restfully upon Tom with his winsome boyishness and his splendid manliness.

"I should like to know this Mattee Sue who has so caught his fancy."

She lingered with vivid intensity upon the incipient romance that gave promise of extending, at least into friendship. At length she rose in the fast darkening night, and gathered together the loose sheets of manuscript. As she turned to the desk she saw a young girl standing by the entrance of an adjoining room. She spoke to her. The only response was a faint odor of jessamine. Then the sky seemed shot with flame; a figure swirled into shape from out vortexes of smoke, and drawn slowly but surely into the circle of danger, she saw Tom.

"I am afraid!" she gasped. "Afraid!"

Within the confines of herself, a voice spoke,—

"'The Name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe.'"

With mind and heart, steadily she maintained this

thought, until slowly, the flame, the terrifying figure, vanished, leaving Tom unscathed. A moment more, and he, too, disappeared. The young girl remained motionless and sweet. She held a spray of yellow jasmine toward Agnes, then seemed to blend into the shadows.

"Agnes!" It was Tom's voice at the door. "I left Mattee Sue's letter with you. May I get it? Ah, you have it in your hand."

He took it quickly from her and left the room. Agnes looked at her fingers, still in the attitude of holding.

"Her letter in my hand!" she gasped.

Her moment of assertiveness was over. She staggered to a couch and burst into tempestuous weeping.

CHAPTER IX.

"We often do more good by our sympathy than by our labors, and render to the world a more lasting service by absence of jealousy and recognition of merit than we ever could render by the straining efforts of personal ambition."

Farrar.

"AGNES, come and see what father has given me," said Tom, a few days after his sister reappeared in the family circle.

The two crossed the wide sweep of lawn. Tom unlocked the door of the summer house, which he had fitted up as a laboratory, and they entered. At once Agnes' eyes lighted upon two manikins, unduly full of color, in contrast, as they were, with several skeletons.

"What beauties!" she exclaimed, admiringly. "They are so handsome, they do not even look gruesome."

"They are healthy, aren't they! These other fellows are positively mortified. Cheer up, old chap, you have your uses, too."

He gave one of the skeletons a friendly punch.

"Isn't father magnificent! These manikins represent at least three zeroes in money. They are male and female; ideal height and proportions. Here is the old fellow's liver, and here are his stomach and lungs."

He drew out the perfectly fitting pieces and displayed them with the joyousness of a child.

Agnes became a sickly yellow as she turned away her head.

"I abhor the physical! Besides, it is all illusion!"

"We do not abhor what has no dominion over us," said Tom gravely, "nor what we honestly believe illusion. That would be to abhor *nothing*! You will be in bondage to the physical every moment of your existence, till you learn its rightful place in the plan of manifesting energy. See from these figures how wonderfully you are made. No marvel of engineering but is patterned after the working principle of the body; no mystery of science but we are finding inherent in it. Look at this network of nerves and these hemispheres of brains. See how carefully they are equipped for service. To-day, we *know* that our every emotion makes tissues, healthy or unhealthy. A man is building sound kidneys every time he produces the tissue-making quality of a healthy emotion. Every time we permit doubt or fear to pass this sentinel, where the nerve plexus joins the brain, we are incorporating destructive material into our bodies as actually as if we were taking chloral. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he!"

"I am tired of hearing that. It should be as a man has thought, for what is one to do with the vast accretion of his indiscriminate selections, chosen during the eons since he began!"

"Transmute it, even as the disintegrating of the rocks beneath our fields results in different chemical combinations that give food to different crops."

"I love to believe that the Fountain Head of Creation is pure and all abundant; that souls are emanated therefrom as expressions of the processes whereby completion is attained; and that each soul has, in totality, all that the Great Original possesses, but not grown, so to speak. Can you trace the processes from the beginnings of the individual soul expression to our present stage?"

"As I understand, your mentality is the result of

all discriminative acts performed by your soul, even in its first forms of life. As a soul, you, at each stage, needed an embodiment indicative of the choices you had made, and in the climb you came to the stage of physical embodiment."

"And you think the result of this physical embodiment is accreted mentality?"

"That is my idea. This, in turn, was, and always is, nurtured by the brooding Holy Mother Spirit."

"So when this structure is entrusted to our own discretion—?"

"It is sustained, renewed, and constantly reformed and illumined through our discriminative actions, the same now, when we are conscious of our powers as was the case when the choice was unconscious."

"Then it is at this stage that our moral accountability begins, because we are coadjutors with God."

"So I understand it. Oh, don't you see the value of gaining conscious supremacy over all our states of readjustment or flux, by intelligent direction of tissue-making emotions, and testing their value through the medium of this wonderful register, the human body! Do let me use these manikins to help put you on your feet."

"I know you want to be helpful; but, dear, I do not truly feel that I am off my feet. Of course, there is much I do not understand, and I have much to learn; but I feel that my feet are firmly based in Principle. I wish that Principle unfolded; but my feet shall not be moved. I want to rise above the teachings of Aunt Luella, which were supposed to be spiritual but were really material. I realize what an influence this training has had in producing immature states of mind and body, expressing in agony and confusion. That part, Tom, is illusion. Spirit is all, and expresses only in grace and in truth."

Tom looked at his sister despairingly.

"I should not like to worship a God who presents to my mind magical proclivities! To me, it would be as undesirable as worshipping the conceptions of John Calvin's brain. If you have it *in your mind* to discard a God, who, you believe, has made you a worm, for one who has made you an illusion, I don't think much of the change! I'd far rather be a worm, for there is opportunity for transmutation. I, too, believe Spirit is all; or call it all Material! What difference, the name you give it! It is all One, expressing the same ideal through its different stages of unfoldment. No part of it is illusion or reflection or shadow; it is emanation or reflexion of the One Great Spirit, expressing through all grades of understanding, as the child in the nursery begins his study of relations with one; the astronomer towers into the constellations, and the Christ, to heights beyond, on the Principle of that same Almighty One! Does this tire you?"

"No. I am interested, but—"

"Think you should not be? Listen a minute longer and see if I do not take you, in sequence, to your own point of vantage, but with better understanding of your foundation. I do not set myself up as a mentor; but I am thankful, every day, for my liberal upbringing, that never inoculated me with the virus of fear or introduced the doubts you so constantly contend with. From that platform, no one can oust me and, in standing on it, I trespass on no one's preserves."

"I am so simple!" sighed Agnes. "Often, I think I should be well and happy were it not for all these philosophical discussions,—no—dogmatic, I mean. Philosophy is not confusing and brain-wracking. To me, it is like a broad stream of water, down which one may float, looking into the light that is mellowed to suit our vision. As we float, light illumines all the ob-

jects along the shores. It draws the little wood-birds to the brink, to partake freely of this water of life; serpents and reptiles are won from dark hiding-places to bask upon its banks in the sunshine. It colors the clouds, that, even as they vanish, reveal the processes of phenomena; it gives us flashes and flecks of its violet and ultra-violet rays and shows us that the broad river flows on, bearing us with it,—not on the stream of time, but on the stream of wisdom. Truth is the bark by which we are borne to the ocean of understanding. Understanding! God, guide the bark!”

She paused a moment, then began again,—

“If the time-honored definition of truth be a good one—that it is ‘the correspondence between the idea and its objectifying,’ however low in the scale is the idea, if it is correspondingly objectified, still it is a truth. The horrible voodoo practices, objectifying an idea, are truth. Tom!” Exasperatedly, she threw out her hands toward the manikins, that, unmoved and smiling, stood ready to objectify his arguments. “What is the use of my studying physical structure, when I can *pray*? When I can light the seven altars of my soul, symbolized in this body (which, in itself, is but a symbol)? When I can say: run, feet, and worship the Supreme Ideal by service; bow, knee, in homage to your Maker; express, thighs, the splendor of the Wisdom that dominates the idea of you! Having gained wisdom through sacrifice upon these altars of obedience, I may learn the Law. Then, I may walk therein. Upon the altar of creation I may lay my conceived truth, brood over it and bear it into light, a larger truth. Upon the altar of the sun of my physical being I may place love and it shall illumine me. On the altar of my mentality I may place what I do not understand and it shall be revealed; on the altar of spiritual insight I may lay myself and I shall express

its message to the world. Your smiling, inane manikins are expressive of an idea in which there is truth, and this embodiment of mine is true, actually real; but each expresses a correspondence between ideas of limited range and their equally limited objectifying. My idea does not balance with my *living the life*, other than by pitiful fits and starts, because I do not keep aligned with Wisdom, while my mental camera is sweeping from the Gethsemanes to the hilltops."

"Which, expressed in symbolism, is exactly what I am attempting to demonstrate. We are very close to each other after all; but except for the abominable veil of words you are far beyond me in vision, beckoning me toward light."

They were leaving the laboratory. Tom had turned to close the shutters, when Agnes leaped across the room and pushed him against the wall. Before he could recover sufficiently to inquire into her action, a great mastiff bounded in at the entrance, sprang across the spot where he had been standing and, in lieu of him, flew at one of the manikins, brought it to the floor and began to maul it ferociously.

"Down, Basco! Good fellow!" he called; but the usually obedient animal paid no attention.

"Don't call him away! Therein is our safety!" cautioned Agnes. "We cannot get to the door."

As she spoke, they heard hasty footsteps and Mr. Landell came swiftly down the path.

"Don't move. I am going to shoot."

There came a flash, an explosion, and the handsome creature lay stretched over the prized manikin.

"Was that necessary!"

Tom's voice was full of the hurt of his heart. The Landells loved their animals, and the dog was one of their most cherished.

"It had to be," said Mr. Landell. "I fear I must

do the same for Prince. Basco bit him and I found him thrashing the ground in agony. I have sent for the veterinary. He must be here by now."

They left the summer house and went to the corral, where lay Mr. Landell's special driving horse. The veterinary stood beside him, looking thoughtful.

"Put up your pistol, Mr. Landell," he said. "Nature has been good to him, and put him to sleep her own way. How did it happen?"

"Basco—the dog—bit him."

They retraced their steps to the laboratory. The dog lay where the unerring shot had felled him. A strange change was taking place in his appearance.

"This isn't rabies, I feel sure."

The surgeon looked more closely, then straightened suddenly.

"Any rattlesnakes about here?"

"Yes. Basco was out foraging down by the swamp, this morning."

"That is it! He was bitten and his bite inoculated the horse. Well for all that it has ended as it has."

"But for Agnes," said Tom, awestruck, "and I should have been lying there."

CHAPTER X.

Be still and know that I AM God.

Psalm xlvii-10.

AGAIN the afternoon sun glinted through the leaves of the trumpet vines and the heavy wistaria, streamed in at the open casement of the little mountain shooting-box, and shimmered in broad mosaic upon the floor. A woman of noble bearing was moving about the room. She would have seemed strangely out of place, had not her personality imbued the apartment with herself. It seemed as if she had called upon the sunbeams to garnish the bareness and had made servitors of the breezes and the vine leaves, to lay for her a tessellated pavement. An invalid sat in an arm-chair by the open casement, looking blankly toward the hills. Silence, fraught with terrible tension, loomed chasm-like between the two. Moments passed. At length, the son moved restlessly and turned heavy eyes toward his mother:

"It is useless longer to evade the question! I will know! The days of the friendly people in the wilderness have passed, and, even so, I am no Elijah to be fed by them. There is an almoner at the gate. Who is it?"

Mrs. Herman did not reply. The man's hitherto expressionless face flashed command upon her as he eyed her piercingly.

"How have we existed?"

The mother looked long and intently into the soul of her son as he faced her. A slender man, he was,

with fair hair and features like chiselled marble. Only his large deep eyes betrayed the crater of emotion that seethed within.

"I am well aware of the condition of our bank account. It will be useless to attempt to deceive me."

"Have you ever known me to do that, from the moment you looked into my eyes and knew me as your mother?"

"Moments like this bring out all sorts of devilish traits," he retorted, insolently.

"Moments like this bring out the God in man!"

He moved fretfully.

"It is useless to quibble. I will know."

"I am not going to tell you, now. You must conserve your strength for other matters. There is time enough!"

"Yes, all my lifetime in which to realize that I am a failure and a burden—"

"Some one is coming toward the house."

Mrs. Herman turned to the window, as she spoke.

"It is a boy in a wagon, with a basket and some flowers."

Grateful for the interruption, she went to the door.

"Mr. Mevin says he's been afishin' an' as how he thought you mought like these fresh pickerel."

The little fellow looked confidingly into Mrs. Herman's face as he delivered the message and continued,

"He says, cook 'em quick, an' if the sick man can't eat 'em, you can, an' as how he hopes you'll enjoy 'em, an' how's the gentleman? An' I brought you some flowers I picked," he concluded shyly, "I ain't never had to stay in the house in all my life. It must be awful!"

Mrs. Herman's smile repaid the lad, and made him happy "way down deep inside," as he described the sensation to his mother.

Giving the flowers to Philip, she took the fresh, firm fish from the basket.

"What is your name?" she asked the child. "I love to think of my friends by name, and I shall think of you often, now."

"Jeff Parmelee, an' I'll bring you some more, some-time. Say, what's the matter with the gentleman!"—for such time as he could spare from looking into the eyes of the beautiful lady were occupied in scanning the room and its other occupant.

"Good-bye, I must go!" he exclaimed suddenly, as, frightened, he ran back to his horse and drove away.

Mrs. Herman turned toward her son. He sat where she had left him; but he had become an ashen gray. The flowers lay at his feet and he was staring at the newspaper which had protected them. His eyes were as those without vision—fastened upon some horror. She ran to him. One glance at the staring headlines and she knew she had no need to tell him who their almoner was. She did not speak. She prayed. The old newspaper slipped to the floor, where the flowers nestled at his feet. He covered his face with his thin hands, shivering as with ague, while veins swelled to cords in his forehead. A moment, and his bowed form straightened tensely and he struggled to his feet. The nerve force lasted but an instant and his mother moved swiftly forward to support him as he staggered against the wall.

"I could kill her for the affront," he groaned. "I am a Lazarus, made dependent by God's very scheme of salvation, pagan, brutal, bestial, and diabolic. When men tear their fellows asunder, and suck their blood, they obey the dictates of a master that forces them, as He forced Abel, to kill helpless lambs for His altars, to propitiate Him. If, like Cain, we offer fruits of endeavor, we are cast into outer darkness!"

He sank into his chair and gripped the arms until his hands grew white and the blood purple underneath the nails.

"Man makes such a master as you portray," said his mother, firmly. "It is an idea conceived by an undeveloped child-race of people, who believed in saving themselves and adding to their possessions by shedding the blood of any one who interfered with their self-appointed ambitions. They idealized the phantasies of an untrained imagination and voiced them in terms fitting their child-minds, as children express their understanding of principles by impersonating them as giants, fairies, bogeys. To-day, when man has grown beyond child's understanding, such conceptions insult God and degrade man. Be thankful, Philip! We were in desperate condition when these helpers came, I know not whence nor how. You were dying, alone with me."

"Dragged back to live a mortgaged life! Why didn't you let me go!—"

"You can repay."

"You know I cannot! I am owned by every man, woman, and child who has put a penny into this fund! They have eaten me as they have eaten their berries, and have made a festival out of me! They have danced on the battle-field of my lost independence, and offer me the coppers paid for the privilege. The very thing we blame degenerates for, we praise God for doing—producing incapables. God has no right to create a man without giving him inherent capacity for taking care of himself!"

"So He does create him!"

"Tossed into a world to which I never wanted to come, and left here,—a pauper!"

"No soul ever came without its own will and choice, on a quest of its own seeking."

Mrs. Herman spoke without antagonism; but with childlike directness.

"I! A minister! I am a travesty on the word!"

"To that I must agree, if you portray to others no nobler conception than you are showing me. So long as you believe in a Being who dispenses food and drink like a slaveholder in the shambles, so long will your idea of the heavenly state be on a plane of material comfort. If you think of Him as an external personal ruler, spiritual gain will mean to you only material preferment."

"I have tried to believe He is other than that; but facts bear out—"

"In every new relation of life—and you know this—our concept of God is readjusted. Not the already manifest; but the Spirit Potency is true measure of yourself."

"That is balderdash! Nero and Claudius were worthy creations of such a Maker."

"'Be still, and know that I Am God!'"

He moved restively.

She repeated softly,

"'Be still, and know that I Am God!'"

A hush stole over the room, and deepened into silence. After a long while, Mrs. Herman spoke.

"God is the potential of all things. He seems to you a changeable person, because that is all you are now capable of understanding. The real God awaits your recognition. Do you choose to make friends instead with the imperfect concept of your own conceiving? Past the outer courts of consciousness, deep in your Holy of Holies, you will find the Presence! 'Be still and know that I Am God!'"

There was a long, long silence; then Philip rose and groped like a blind man to the bed, where he lay motionless. The sun crept higher in the heavens, then

down into the forest. Great shadows thrust out fingers, clutching at the darkling spaces of the room. Long arms stretched into the apartment as the spectres of the darkness gathered and filled the silent house. There was no moon; there were no stars; there was no sound upon the lonely hillside save the low bugle call of the wind, as, stealthily, it scouted among the gathering clouds, summoning its cohorts in the sky.

Two weeks later, Agnes and her father were on their way, in a little road cart, to the Hermans'.

"I am ashamed to meet them!" Agnes' face was tense with remorse. "I tried to help them, and see what terrible conditions I have precipitated upon them. I do not seem to have the slightest idea how to be helpful."

"That is no easy thing to know," said her father tenderly.

"I might have had more discernment than to put two gentlepeople on a par with the bread line. Apart from the resulting sensationalism, in which I, as well as they, have suffered, it was unforgivable in me. I shall never get over it, and I do not see how they can."

"Need is a great leveler. The wisest minds rarely have been able to rise superior to its specific gravity."

"You never make a spectacle of any case."

"I may have done so at your age."

"How beautifully you have recognized their self-respect, even after I nearly demolished it. In the quietest manner possible—I don't believe you asked a question—I don't see how you do it—you found the son to be an ordained preacher, a brilliant speaker and of irreproachable character, as well as of my communion. You recalled the departure of Mr. Kerrick and the thing was done. You have succeeded in placing him in the very town where my indiscretion humiliated him,

and he is given opportunity to redeem himself. You are wonderful!"

Mr. Landell smiled.

"Tell me, how can you be on such loving terms with members of the church that so nearly wrecked your life?"

"Because I realize that they saved me to myself. Look at the clouds! We must hasten or be drenched."

"I cannot meet them! Yet, I must! I am glad to be under your wing—"

"Under the wing of the Almighty, Agnes, which broods over your own heart! And, dear, by no means bear with you an atmosphere of self-condemnation. That checks comradeship at once."

He put the horse to a quick trot, and, as the first drops fell, they drew up to the cottage door.

"Just in time, Mrs. Herman!" He threw the reins about the whip, preparatory to leading the horse to the little shed in the rear. "The clouds have been chasing us for the last half hour, and here comes the deluge."

As he spoke, lightning, in a series of blinding flashes, rent the masses of inky clouds, and long and repeated reverberations of thunder heralded the downpour.

Within, the incisive sound of the falling rain was softened, and the odor of the refreshed forest mould was wafted in energizing pungence through the house.

"If you like storms, you will find a splendid view from this window," suggested Philip.

The latent strength of the man was asserting itself; but his face reflected an almost impenetrable gloom.

Agnes approached the window and, because he was her host, he stood beside her.

The sun seemed to rest upon the hilltops, above which radiated arch after arch of light. Through the rain, the sun's rays sprayed out in pennons, refracting

prismatic colors, and the clouds were tinged with roseate-copper hues. Forked and chain lightning darted in every direction, while ribboned scrolls of fire unfurled golden lengths in great and sweeping swirls across the sky. Ploughing through the sunbeams they shot into the heart of a double rainbow, then plunged into the near-by stream.

"Sunshine and shadow," she meditated, forcing herself to act on her father's advice but realizing that she was far from succeeding.

"To a marked degree," he responded coldly, while deep lines between his eyebrows evidenced his enforced submission to conditions.

"A bit bromidic, I acknowledge," sensing his antagonism and stung by it, feeling, as she could not fail to do, the heaviness of her remark.

In nervous endeavor to recoup, she continued to talk irrelevantly, for her sake trying to save what she felt was a horrible situation, and for his relief endeavoring to bestow comfort through parable.

"Everything I see turns my thoughts toward solving life's problems. The law of association impels me to acknowledge the 'doctrine of concords and discords' and to study the 'just adaptation of parts with each other.'"

A tree near the house crashed to the earth, and, following the surge of wind that felled it, peal after peal of thunder echoed among the hills, to be caught and tossed from cloud to cloud. Electricity flashed momentarily, and the rain fell in oblique and blinding sheets.

"Like life, this storm brings sunshine and tempest into harmony," Agnes continued. "Now, it is developing the motif, Suffering. The first movement was an adagio, through the sunshine singing to the heart that suffering is unnecessary. Then, through the

advancing and the receding clouds, there stole a fugue movement, sounding, in the reiterant dripping of the rain, that suffering is ever present. The scherzo of the lightning and the wind stir wilder harmonies, singing that through sorrow we come into illumination. Now, the tempest sings the motif far above the emotional and the sentimental, far above *feeling*, balancing the relationship of parts with parts, in constant readjustment with the whole of universal life."

Taking a deep breath of the invigorating air, she moved reluctantly, that Philip might close the window to the raging storm. The sound of the downpour came to them muffled now, but still terrifying, and the wind shook the cottage to its foundations.

"'The elements rage together to attain the liberty of God!'" he repeated meditatively.

Agnes started. A burning sting preceded the suffusion of her eyes with tears, as her favorite text came through the sounding tempest from his heart to hers. She throbbed with joy, at once oblivious to all else, as the phrase limned on her mind a picture of the time, when, all humanity, having passed through ignorance and dogma, should attain to the liberty of God, of which, so often and so long, she had dreamed. In these moments of her seraphic vision, she was almost brutally unconscious of another's thought, as well as of tragedies enacted before her, as, at other moments, when, the seer merged in the woman, she was acute to every pain that swept through others' hearts. Often, too, she was inundated with invisible approachments, and, ignorant of the cause of her distemper, was equally ignorant of means for her protection.

While the tree was quivering with the impetus of its fall, lightning filled the air, followed, instantly, by a crash of thunder. The little shed was rent, and the cart within shattered by the bolt. With a snort of

fright, the horse fell, and the occupants of the room were shocked back from the windows, for the moment, stunned. Then their blood bounded, as they 'inhaled the spirit of the shaft.' Sparks flew from the irons at the fireplace and shot from the metal fastenings on the window frames.

"That bolt struck near by!" Mr. Landell, who was the first to recover, assured himself of the safety of his companions, then swept the view without. There, struggling from the ground where she had been thrown, was the horse. Even as his eyes took in the situation, he saw her, with staring eyes and arching neck, bounding toward home, each crash adding to her terror and speed.

At the same instant, Agnes called excitedly,

"Father, Jetty is leaping down the road. She will be killed."

"I think not. Doubtless, she is making for her stall. Now, how about our getting home? The storm is spending itself and we should be not too far behind the horse, lest your mother be alarmed."

Even as the frightened but uninjured creature disappeared round a bend in the road, the rain lessened, dropping with a gentle tinkle betokening its cessation. As Mr. Landell spoke, the sun shone upon the still falling rain-drops. Ruby, green, and gold shot from the rain prisms in the air and flashed upon the grass and leaves.

"A fairy land of beauty!"

In rapture, she opened the casement.

"Mr. Herman, I must tell you, this minute, what I came purposely to express to you,—our joy that you are coming to speak to us of the liberty of God."

"We are fortunate, for here is a carriage." Mr. Landell turned from the window from which he had

been watching the road. "If the occupants can take us in we shall reach home nearly as soon as Jetty."

"It is Grace Herrick! Grace, let us go home with you?" Agnes signaled the passing carriage.

"How came you here, you beneficent fairy?" she continued, as, after adieux, the father and daughter entered their friend's vehicle and started down the mountain side. "Did you see anything of Jetty on the way?"

"I saw a horse trotting comfortably along just below here. If I had known it was yours, I should have been frightened to death. What has happened?"

Graphically, Agnes described the occurrence, but it was plain that after the first burst of inquiry Grace lost interest, seeing which, she changed to personalities, whereupon Grace brightened perceptibly.

"How is it that you are way out in the country, yet show no signs of having been in a storm?"

"We stopped at a farm-house through the worst of it, then when it cleared I could not bear to go back to that stuffy little hotel so I told James to drive on up here. There is always something languorously exciting about passing that shooting box with the chance of seeing Adonis at the window doing nothing, and 'I a princess, king descended' sweeping the doorstep. About time, I say, for Adonis to be handling the broom and 'I a princess,' to be doing nothing. Smell the sweet briar, as the wheels brush against it."

"It seems to take bruising to express sweetness from plants as well as persons."

"Don't you grow tired following your metaphors and similes about? You remind me of an aunt. When she had anything special to do, she'd take a siesta to prepare for it. I've seen her lie down to compose herself before starting for a train she was afraid she would miss."

"Most of us have some eccentric relation." Smilingly, Agnes thought of her Cousin Matilda. "But I am not like your aunt,—I rush into things."

"You see I am not capable of going off on side-journeys to make points that can be followed. You aren't, either, if you do think you are. I *mean*, that, whatever any one says, at once you go off on a tortuous journey of your own, instead of keeping to the straight line. One can't say you don't stick to the subject, for you do; but you try to find some great lesson that never was there to find, and that nobody meant. If you were not so self-centred, you'd see I am heart-broken. *Now*, what are you thinking about? Do you suppose you are keeping still, because you are not talking? Your thoughts talk louder than words! They fairly scream!"

"I haven't seen Mr. Vernon with you for some time," said Agnes, suddenly, not noticing the unjust thrust. "What has become of him?"

"I—I—" Grace's control, over which she had very indifferent hold, left her completely, "I sent him away."

"Away! Aren't you engaged to be married to him?"

"Come up-stairs and I'll tell you about it!"

As the horse drew up before the hotel entrance, Grace alighted quickly and ran to her room.

"Father," Agnes waited a moment before following her friend, "Grace wants to speak to me about something of special importance to her. Won't you drive on to relieve mother's concern by the sight of your blessed face? I'll be home soon," and, alighting, she sought Grace.

"What a difference there is in women," mused Dr. Brentford, who from under the hemlocks had seen the two alight. "April's child, as the Herrick nymph

names herself, is all the time on the trail for the hearts and pocket-books of a possible husband in every one she sees; and Agnes Landell, the goddess, who sees no heart, no purse, no husband in any of them, passes by a long train of admirers, and knows them, if at all, only as motes moving between her and the sun."

Discontentedly, he watched Agnes out of sight then morosely turned to his book, though his fancy lingered with her rather than with the printed page.

Agnes found Grace on the bed, sobbing bitterly.

"What is it?" she asked, sympathetically.

"I mean this!" Grace struggled to a sitting posture, hunting, nervously, for her pins, for she had thrown herself into her recumbent position, hat and all.

"Horace Vernon thinks he is too good to marry me and I told him he could go find an angel, for that was the only sort of creature that could live with him. Give me a man of the world! They know women! I told him so one day, and he retorted that I was a child, and didn't know what I was talking about—that he thanked God he was clean—as if I would look at him if he wore dusty clothes and the same necktie two days in succession. He was dreadfully angry and dared criticize my views of life—he called them—as if I were a moving-picture film.

"After I sent him away, he tried and tried to see me and wrote and wrote. He loved me, he said,—just didn't care for all I cared for—as if husbands were expected to like everything wives like—and always were to be pleased with them. I sent his last letter back unopened—that is, I steamed it open, and read it and sealed it again—I love him so I can't bear not to read every word he writes; but I wouldn't for the world let him know it. At last he went away and I can't bear it—I can't bear it!"

"What was the final break about?"

"Bridge and clothes and everything! He said he didn't mind the things I did, so much as my way of looking at them—and that my whole view of life was low!"

"Did he say just that? Horace Vernon is a gentleman, even if he is not a very diplomatic lover."

"He did not put it exactly that way; but it is what he meant! He wants a constantly exalted state of mind in me, and I couldn't stand tiptoe to that sort of thing. We never did at home! Why, I have heard my mother tell the funniest jokes! Think of always having to hush when Horace appeared!"

"Wouldn't they amuse him too?"

"What a child you are! When a group of women tell jokes, no men are allowed. I couldn't even have the fun of repeating them, he'd be so scandalized. Alice Reynolds had to put her head down on the table while she was telling one at Angie Haybridge's luncheon. Horace would think that was awful!"

"So would any decent person!"

"I like that! I was one of the women and I consider myself *very* decent!" Grace was on fire in an instant. "I have the best blood of France and America in my veins!"

"You won't have it long if you pollute it with such poisonous food and vile atmosphere."

"I don't understand you! I eat very good food except when I am in this hole of a hotel, and as for atmosphere!—that is one of the things Horace fussed with me about. Dr. Bland prayed for atmosphere one Sunday when we went to church together and I sputtered. What a thing to pray for; but when I said so, Horace looked as if I had stuck a pin in him, and said in a tone, for all the world like the Merry Widow's beau, 'You don't understand!' He is right! I don't!

It isn't that I want to quarrel with his ideas, I truly don't know what he means! I can't imagine what he found in me to start with, excepting that I am pretty and, until I got him to propose, pretended I understood him. I can look very soulful as long as I open my eyes wide and keep my mouth shut; but after I got him and began to open my mouth, it was different. Can't you say something, Agnes! You are so cold!"

"Cold! My heart is fairly boiling with love for everybody!"

"That is just it! You love by the wholesale! Never even have job lots on which to expend a little attention!"

"It is all one love—the love of the Father. We have more affection and expression toward some; but it is all one love!"

"You must have a lot of affection for me, with my gambling devil's auction and low jokes!" cried Grace in a frenzy. "Don't stand there, looking at me! Can't you do something?"

Alas for Agnes! From the exaltation roused in her by the wonderful display of nature's powers; by the preservation of her loved ones and herself from physical danger, and by the foretaste of spiritual release, she was hurled into an agonizing mystification. She cold! She, who longed to take all humanity to her sister heart and minister to it! However, in the outwardly passive fashion which often admits of greater impression on the mind, she put aside Grace's accusation to contend with in the night watches, and applied herself, as best she knew, to soothing the excited girl, who clung convulsively to her.

"I can't bear it! I love Horace Vernon dearly; but why does he want me to give up the world!"

"He doesn't! Horace Vernon is a healthy-minded fellow. I don't believe he ever uttered that canting

phrase! I am sure his idea is, rather, to *find* the world, in all its purity and happiness and power."

"I don't in the least know what you are talking about. I *wish* you would comfort me!"

"Let me go to him and tell him how you feel. He is not the prig you believe him to be, I am sure. Don't let pride interfere with the happiness of a lifetime."

"Something worse than that is in my way."

Paroxysms of grief shook Grace's slender frame,—

"I have promised to marry Jack Jenkins."

"You know absolutely nothing about the man!" exclaimed Agnes in horror. "He is more than old enough to be your father! What possessed you, Grace? You haven't seen him lately, for he never comes here summers. How did it happen?"

"I went home for a few days while you were sick—"

"Not sick—resting—"

"Whatever you call it then! It looks powerful like *sick* to us uninitiated ones when you can't see any one and everybody acts as if you were dying—"

"About Jenkins—tell me?"

"You know he is a fascinating man and, when I went home, I went over to see your Aunt Luella. He was there attending to her business. It was raining, I had no umbrella and he saw me home and seemed to understand how lonely I was. That night I got an awfully prissy letter from Horace, and, just after I had read it Jack came with a message from your aunt and I went over there with him and—oh he *understood* so well—that's the whole secret, I suspect,—Agnes. He understands me lots better than you do, and then—"

"The old story! I see. Break with him, at once. You gave your word to Horace, first."

"I can't!" in agonized whisper.

Agnes' face grew white. She looked intently into her friend's frightened face.

"Why not?"

"Because," the girl was too convulsed to speak aloud,—“I was so afraid I wouldn't keep my word, I—have—married him—already!”

"Married Jack Jenkins!"

An anguish, almost equal to Grace's own, dawned on her face.

"Grace, Grace, my little child, what have you done!"

CHAPTER XI.

Let the sunlight of your heart shine upon the roses of your endeavor and nurture them into perfection in the gardens of the world.

“ ‘TRANSMUTE the mind’s rebellion into outer purposes, for no having of any worth can come of mean or inconsequential being,’ ” mused Agnes, as, writing pad in hand, she walked into the park, and, coming to an upland near the vineyard, emerged from the shadow of the trees, and settled herself upon the hillside. “ I believe that, yet what a pother I make proving it.”

For half an hour she wrote. Then, reaching the climax of a sketch she was penning, she read aloud the closing lines.

“ From her seat in the empyrean, Truth, Alicia looked down into the great world, where people moved to and fro like clouds, tossing, hurrying, skurrying, changing with every wind of opinion; disintegrating and piling themselves together in new affiliations, with every passing wave of influence. Again and again, as one and another struggled within her reach, she held out her hand to help them. Great was her perplexity and grief when they refused her aid, which would bear them beyond their present turmoil, and accepted that of another far less able than she to help. As she watched, the Christ-consciousness unfolded within her, and through it, she perceived the law of growth. She realized the spiritual intent within the physical hand that would extend in aid. She saw that no one was helping another indiscriminately; that one who seemed near to her often was afar and beyond her power of assistance, and that one who seemed afar was at her very soul; that while her hand was held

out in obedience to her slogan, helpfulness, it was given and clasped, only through the understanding of need, not through propinquity or time or space.

"Two drunken men lurched upon a curbstone, near each other and equally near to her. One, willing and ready to ascend out of the whirling cloud life of shapes took the hand she extended; the other, just as close, was far away. His hand could not touch hers, nor hers touch his, because, in him was no desire to see the visions of the soul. She saw there was no struggle, neither any strife in all this seeming conflict and confusion. She became conscious that the sea and sky, yes, even the cloud-land of shapes and forms were full of an exceeding glory and that the universe sang praises as it had always done, though, until now, she had not been conscious of the harmony playing through seeming dissonance. She was hand in hand with Divine Love and all the worlds and all the firmaments joined in the grand pæan of praise, 'Where the Lord is, is Rest. . . .'"

"How true it is," she let her pen drop idly to her lap, "that no one can help one not ready to receive. How clearly this defines the word, secrecy. There is no such thing as premeditated secrecy. No one can keep from another that to which his consciousness has attained."

Long she sat in the midst of the sylvan beauty, traveling beyond physical boundaries, as her mind followed her train of thought logically through many windings. Suddenly, an expression of purpose flashed into her face. Rising, she ran swiftly down the hill to the park road, and stood at the dividing line of grass and fir needles and cones.

Her head was lifted as if focussing her activities. Then she moved swiftly into a little footpath. After rapid walking, quickened, often, to a run, she reached the crown of a hillock overlooking a hollow filled with a noble growth of hemlocks. The amphitheatre on one side opened on a morass,—the overflow of the lake. At this point, by means of a turf-covered bridge, the

roadway made a continuous circuit close to the water's edge. On the inner side, toward the morass, was a wall covered with clematis. Standing on the stonework, reaching, on tiptoe, for long sprays of the snowy bloom, was Ross Mevin.

"Jump back into the driveway, for your life!" she called.

Recognizing authority in the order, Mevin obeyed. Then he looked for the speaker and the cause for the command. The latter was imminent. A rattlesnake was striking its fangs into the spot where he had stood, while the echo of the rattle, which he had not heard above the rustle of the foliage, came to him now with appalling distinctness.

"That was Agnes Landell," he thought, as he seized a weapon. "Does she send the message from her soul or is she close to me in very flesh!"

The snake was in its death throes when Agnes appeared.

"Are you safe?" she gasped. "Oh, if you had not jumped,—I cannot bear to think of it."

"Willingly would I be within reach of a serpent's fangs to win such light from your eyes, dear heart," he said passionately, quickly compassing the space between them.

A second time she was deaf to his heart's expression in her gratitude that he was safe.

"How did you happen here?"

He looked deep into her eyes, which she had lifted to his, unconscious that he held her hands.

"It was not a 'happen.' I knew I must run to the morass and lose no time! A second—and I should have been too late!"

Mevin gave another searching gaze into her face. Lingeringly, he released her hands, for her radiance was the illumination of the thought that she had saved

a human being, not her soul's love. He continued, a trifle heavily,

"That back leap was the result of six weeks' training when a boy. I was trying for a prize. To the delight of the boys, who said it was given to match my hair, it proved to be an enormous pumpkin. They called me Pumpkin-Head Mevin, until I punched two or three of them."

Agnes laughed—a laugh that rang clear and low, stirring the depths of him.

"I am sure it must have been a very poor match," she looked admiringly at the soft brown hair with sunny gleams of bronze gold lurking in its waves.

"What do you do with yourself?" jealously. "You are like a fairy princess behind insurmountable walls. May no prince invade the sacred precincts?"

"The right prince will."

Mevin was silent. What else was there for him to be, he sighed. These thrusts were certainly difficult to encounter. He did not mind that, if only he might meet them successfully. He tried again.

"I have not seen you since Saturday—and here it is Monday!"

Again she laughed and again his being responded to the melody.

"Are these reptiles seen here often?"

Turning, he looked at the driveway where the snake lay.

"There are a good many on the other side of the hills. Occasionally some stray over here. Our beautiful mastiff, Basco, was bitten here not long ago. Oh, now I know how I was told to come to you."

Mevin ground his teeth. "How soulfully she says it! You! A mere human being."

Again he searched her face, only to find her stalking a thought to cover.

"Perception unto realization, of course.

"Do you believe you are one of the elect?" A touch of pessimism clouded his bright face, followed by sincere inquiry. "I believe you are."

"Do you mean, am I chosen above others who shall be damned? Indeed, no. One of our attributes, as emanations of God, is the will and choice of our every part. If only I could guide my choice instead of being led," she mused. "Too often I am swayed to and fro in strange and terrifying paths."

"What do you know of terrors,—you!" tenderly. Her face became livid.

"In the midst of an outwardly care-free life, I see tragedy in every leaf—not merely to observe but to perceive unto realization. I have trained myself to tell, by the cry of a bird, the nature of the call,—or weal or woe; every human heart throbs its message to me."

He looked at her meditatively.

"And yet she does not hear my cry! Is that course wise?" he added aloud. "Why not perceive the sweetness only and let the sorrow pass?"

"I would not, then, beat to the heartbeat of humanity."

"Sweet soul, as many need to be laughed with and played with as prayed with; more need to be loved than pitied, and it is a great deal more invigorating to all."

"You are quite right," Agnes continued with tantalizing impersonality. "It is not so much what happens to us as what we see in it that matters. If, instead of dwelling on pain and sadness, I could always guide my mind from the highest aspects of the case to the noblest outcome, I could do wonderful things, as when I found the Hermans on Mt. Nodel—"

"And saved my life—tell me about that?" Mevin was too anxious to stay her thoughts on himself to

assist them to stray to Philip Herman. "Did the run to the morass start with thoughts of me?"

"No, I was thinking of the dog.—Did you speak?"

"Not out loud," meekly. "I am interested. How do the dog and I meet in fate's corridors?"

"Recalling that Basco was bitten here, reminded me of the danger of the place to others,—such a pity when it is the finest trouting spot in the region. That led me to think it should be posted at the hotel. I recalled that I heard you inquiring of an hostler for a good trouting brook. That led me to notice that this is a perfect day for fishing. I perceived this association perfectly, but then came as a flash, 'Run to the waterway.' I did not know I was running to you."

"It took some time to get your mind round to me," he returned despondently.

"No, it lighted upon you instantly after the summons. Once I called these leaps of mine into the unknown, intuition, as if intuition were a knowledge without a basis for being. I am following sequences intently, nowadays, and trying to test when these calls are reliable and definite. It is very interesting—when I can be brave and keep away terrors—and the more assured I am the more clearly I perceive."

Mevin sighed exasperatedly.

"Does your attempt to see beyond sight ever lead to obtuseness of the very apparent?" His gentle sarcasm wholly escaped Agnes in her hunt for the abstract. Could he ever pierce, with the ordinary idea of human love, this celestial cranium of his adored one! Was it made of bone fibre or of luminous ether?

He mused, half laughing in the midst of his vexation. Involuntarily, he extended his hand to trace the contour beneath the beautiful but dishevelled hair that, as the result of her flight through the woods, was falling now in shimmering clouds about her face. The

movement ended in the gathering of the pins—poor exchange, for the taking of that loved head to his heart. Her soul, it seemed, he could never approach.

“I think the gap in your sequence—the place where you made a leap instead of a reasoning analysis—is most unfortunate,” he continued, amused, despite his disappointment. “How can you prove that it was law instead of chance that led you to me instead of to another dog?”

“I followed the line in which I had been thinking—and choosing.”

She stumbled a little and her color deepened as she realized that she was contradicting herself.

“Conscious choice in the visible, trains the intelligence to choice in what we call, *beyond sight*.”

As Mevin’s heart bounded to meet this concession, she felled it again by saying,

“I wish I understood! I am doing my best to build my life as Tom is begging me to, by selecting my motives, my visions, my activities,—in short to live with conscious virility instead of unconscious inhibiting through dissatisfaction or regret, and after the manner of ‘automatic instinct,’ that brings action without commensurate results, and seems little more than awareness.”

“Doesn’t so much criticism of yourself—I never hear you criticize others—”

“No, I would not treat my friends as I do myself,—”

“Why should it be less divine to help oneself than others?—and, to go back to what I was saying, doesn’t such critical analysis of yourself crush spontaneity and lead to painful self-consciousness?” and the two went on toward the Landells’.

“No more than the athlete by directed activity on the training ground inhibits his lightning-like deci-

sions on the field of action. It does so far less than my conscious self-condemnation, after some ill-advised activities have developed misadventures. I agree, criticism does all you suggest; but Tom is trying to help me grow out of the critical, which warps, into the interpretative. I want the ability to extend interpretation, intelligently, instead of haphazard, into the realms of intuition and true spiritual insight."

"The pure in heart shall see God, and if they see God they see all. You will see, eventually, dear heart; not with the symbolism which is given to the child mind of man; but evidentially, through wisdom;—but has love for me no part in this vision which is yours—?"

"It is symbolism that I dread,—I do not know how to cope with it. Like most physicians and scientists Tom thinks these are the outgrowth of physical conditions. He thinks I should develop my negative, and then these—what I call extensions of perception, and he calls abnormal sensitiveness,—would disappear."

"Develop your negative?" questioningly and not approvingly.

"Yes; but not as the term is often used."

"Certainly he does not wish you to become a dependent or a subjective!"

"Exactly the opposite. I know he thinks I'm tending toward the dependent, and wishes me to push intelligently beyond it; but I think he does not wholly understand how very close I often am to God, because he sees me sometimes when I have lost my vision. I know I am right often, for when I see true, and know true, as I look back I find I was in the peace that passeth understanding and in the kingdom of righteousness,—no puzzling or complexity; for the visions of God come not out of waving clouds."

He looked at her tenderly; comprehendingly.

She went on.

"There are things in my experience I do not at all understand, but cannot deny, nor lay wholly to physical exhaustion or nerves, as Tom might. I am not sure but that we both are right,—"

"Certainly, it is wise to prepare the physique for any demands that may be put upon it."

"One of Dr. Wehr's prescriptions is that I do what I choose instead of what I think I should."

"Are they not the same?"

"Rarely. I seem to have an idea—Tom thinks it is from overstrain—and I think it is through unfoldment of soul forces that I have not become acquainted with and which frighten me,—that what I wish to do, often is wrong. To balance this mind action with present physical possibilities, I am to be more spontaneous and less dutiful, so attaining the very results you suggest such tutoring may check."

"If your physician gives that prescription to everyone, his office must fail to hold his patients. Tell me more."

"Dr. Wehr says I have forced my will past the dictates of intelligence and reason until I have lost the use of choice, weakened my ability to direct desire, lessened my vitality, and rendered myself liable to confuse intuition with nerve disturbance."

"Isn't that dangerous training for most of us? You have not a wish in the world that would harm any one; but many of us have. What a doctrine for men who desire things, and all sorts, at that! It is licensing the hosts of unbridled wickedness. Is the doctor an advocate of the theory, that desire, not will, is the motive-power to be expressed, because repression increases the strength of desire, and later, will act more insistently, upon self and posterity?"

"If you mean, does he advocate projecting experiences into one's life for experiences' sake, he does not. He teaches intelligence of desire, whose motor is Spirit, not emotionalism, and whose impelling power to attract its own quality works in harmony with the active will to express it."

"It seems a serious matter to attempt to define Omniscience by the dictionary of our limited understandings. Does the doctor ever tell you to be angry if you choose?" he pursued, wondering whether she would be more charming if less theoretical.

"If I choose; but my instruction leads me, rather to 'transmute the mind's rebellion into outer purposes of nobler stuff.' I was contemplating that when the call came to run to you."

"Would you had been running to me—but I am never to forget that I am simply a human being in your world-orbed eyes. Do you ever want to be angry?"

"Often, especially when the electrostatic potentials of the atmosphere—"

"The what?"

"The electrostatic potentials—"

"I heard you the first time; I want to see you form those words with that exquisite Cupid's bow of a mouth," he returned, daringly.

A sudden gloom swept to her eyes and seemed to encircle him with her displeasure.

"I wish you would want to be angry," continued the wily Mevin, delighted with his success. "At least she heard that," he comforted himself. "Could you be angry on provocation? Let go of yourself for a minute, and fire about bricks. You are so awfully good, you induce electrostatic potentials in others' atmospheres. Tell me, were you ever angry or unwise?"

Agnes stood still. A transformation took place

within her as if a garden rose had become a deadly nightshade. Her personality was infused with the poison of a remorse-bearing thought. Mevin was appalled.

"Why ask me that?" she said slowly. "'An evil memory promptly antagonizes the functioning of the good memories, slowly poisoning, not only the body in which memory is incorporate, but memory itself.' Yes, once, in a rage, I tried to stab my nurse with a penknife, then was barely prevented from setting fire to the barn."

"You do go to extremes," Mevin was startled. "Surely, I should agree with your brother that that was nerves and no part of you. Anything else?"

"I punched my doll's eyes out with a pair of scissors."

An agony of self-condemnation changed the despair-permeated goddess of a moment before.

Mevin burst into irrepressible laughter. The anticlimax, from a truly diabolical outburst to a fit of baby petulance, and the equality of her remorse over both incidents, appealed to him as overwhelmingly funny.

"You need not laugh," she said, mournfully. "There was murder in my heart when I did it."

Suddenly, she surprised Mevin by sinking to the ground and dropping her head into her hands.

"Do you really suppose it was you?"

He asked this, looking down at her in an attitude of almost fierce protection.

Agnes sat upright. Her eyes blazed with terror.

"I have always supposed so," she gasped. "Do you mean—?"

"Was there no one near you—behind you—who disliked some one also near you?" he insisted, his attitude of mental protection over her becoming more apparent as he spoke.

She sat very still. Memory was collecting forces for her emancipation.

"I recall this,—for a long time I never thought of the incident without there being pictured intensely upon my mind, in connection with it, the figure of the gardener, who on both occasions stood behind me. When I was older, I heard that he was my nurse's lover and that they had fierce quarrels. I believe he tried to kill her, and once he set her house on fire. He was convicted of arson. Do you mean—?"

Horror swept over her. She trembled so that Mevin put out his hand.

"You are safe,—safer, now that you know such things may be. Do not blame yourself too much."

"I blame myself the more."

She gripped her hands convulsively.

"Do you call it any *excuse* to hide behind the claim of influence or hypnotism! It is a double weakness! The weakness of me, and the weakness that I have let other than God possess me! Is that what Cousin Matilda is doing! *Possessing me!* I thank you, thank you, thank you."

He looked at her questioningly. She did not explain but continued,

"I fail in so much. Tell me, Mr. Mevin, I do not go about, often, seeking advice; but think what I have done to those two fine people on the hill by this publicity! I die daily in remorse. How can I atone!"

Mevin placed his hand above the bowed head without touching it; but the stray and glistening hairs rose to meet the tenderness of his touch and soft peace enfolded her.

"Dear Miss Landell!"

She sat silent. She knew, no better, how to cope with her problems, but she felt at rest. When she

looked up, there was something in her eyes that was not there before.

"What would happen should I give myself the privilege of doing what I choose!" Mevin said grimly to himself, as, having left Agnes at the house, he walked thoughtfully away. "Have I sufficient purity of heart and clarity of vision to dare the test! What are my heart's desires, considering matters specific! To marry Agnes Landell, is first and foremost. I seem far enough from that realization. I cannot even make her hear when I tell her that I love her. I wonder if she ever will hear!

"Now, to voice a second wish of my heart,—whether she hears me or not, may I prove worthy of her."

He sat under a tree and pulled out some letters which he read carefully, then thrust back despairingly. "Desires! Should I fulfil them all, I might not be a victim of repression but would diffuse into invisibility. She said *select!* I will crack the shell and find the kernel of her idea. She does set me to thinking, and though I could wish her more human at times, the powerful uplift of her wings raises me to planes of living where, I, too, some time may fly."

CHAPTER XII.

There is no way under or over or around experience other than through understanding.

AGAIN Philip Herman stood gazing blankly from the window of the hunting lodge, his back toward his mother and his face toward despair. It was the day before the removal of the two to the parsonage of the church at Beneby.

After a long silence, he turned and spoke bitterly.

"Since you and that woman have given me the rôle of pauper to play instead of letting me fulfil my heart's desire to die, as I was well on the way to doing, I hope you will not bruit abroad your belief, to-night, to every inquisitive brother and sister whose curiosity leads them to inspect your creed, but will help me hold this paltry defense against starvation."

"Had it been the desire of your heart it would have been fulfilled." Mrs. Herman looked up from the preparation of their simple repast. "It was the desire of despair."

"How can I tell those people that the *physical* blood of a *spirit* God will atone for all they have done and that their vows of repentance will make whole years of wreckage! It is hard enough in the face of my own unbelief; but to see those eyes of yours give me the lie—"

Dull flames of rage swept from his eyes to hers as he spoke.

"Never have I interfered with your expression,

Philip. If your own heart and experience challenge your doctrine, don't blame me! Say what you believe. That alone eventually carries power."

There were wonderful sweetness and strength in the words and her poise halted him; but he began again:

"To speak openly is to antagonize; to speak covertly, is to use the temple for purposes no less loathly than did the sons of Eli when they prostituted the sacredness of life to their own uses in their own day and manner. Mother, I am afraid! Afraid to lie and afraid to tell the truth. Yet I am unfitted for any other profession."

Mrs. Herman looked at him with sympathy untouched by pity.

"Take a walk into the sunset," she said, after several minutes, during which she watched him with composure born of faith.

Without further speech, Philip left the room. Mrs. Herman sat still for a long, long time, "listening to hear what God would say."

"Who will go with me to welcome the new minister?" asked Agnes, that evening, before the assembled family.

"Agnes!" groaned Tom, "I will if you want me to, but how can you suggest father's stepping inside that church! I couldn't go were I he; but doing good to them that despitefully use you is no book religion with him."

"No one can injure us without the mind's consent, you know that," returned Mr. Landell.

"Their prayer meeting is a regular farce, anyway," continued Tom. "Sister Benkoni will kneel down and pray, only heaven knows what,—quite the proper thing in prayer but not exactly what the old soul intends. She begins way down low and goes faster and faster

and higher and higher, till, out of breath and at the end of her gamut, she has to stop. The inadequacy of her method is proven by the fact that though, according to historical evidence, she has called on her God in the same fashion for forty years, she is as uncertain as ever of results. Then will follow those ridiculous sentence prayers and split-minute testimonies without a particle of spirituality—for no one can induce spiritual fervor by turning a mental crank. Bullock will lay hold on the horns of the altar, and Discock will roll on the car of salvation. Lapham will tell for the 'steenth time how he was converted and, after he sits down, think up a scheme to beat Olney out of that lot he wants so badly. Percy will urge a revival, which is an orgy of emotionalism and hypnotism combined. Father, did you know there was a revivalist here last week who said, 'Some people call religion principle. Friends, if I were to take my bride to the altar and give her the kiss of principle she would leave me where I stand'?"

"If he feels that way, he doesn't quite understand what is meant by principle. If he did, he would know that the foundations of society rest on the acceptance of the marriage relation as based on principle instead of on unrestrained passion. Principle is a unit or basis of action. Law is the statement of standards and standards demonstrate growth. The purpose of law is unity of action in the expression of a given principle! A noble, but by no means a universal definition of law is unity of action with its basis,—or, the search for truth."

Tom reflected his father's calm as he responded,

"They think we mean something bloodless and impersonal. We do get dreadfully mixed in terminology. Still, your tender attitude toward ignorance does not prevent the fact that emotional and religious

excesses run hand in hand and the physicians know it. I cannot understand why they have not risen as one man and explained to the public that both are anesthesia to intelligence. They represent illegitimate uses of vital potency, which sacred possession proves our sonship. When we realize that religion is not a Bacchanalian orgy, but the loving application of principle to the daily task,—that is, the fulfilling of the law,—these excesses will be considered as serious abuses and supplanted by intelligent worship. Agnes, how can you remain in a church communion that countenances such methods!”

“They are in a phase of growth and I want to help them. More than Mr. Herman’s encouragement depends on this meeting to-night.”

“Let us go,” said Mr. Landell, “to hear the speech of others, free from cavil or assent.”

As the Landells were nearing the meeting house, Dr. Brentford and Ross Mevin met them. After they had passed, Mevin turned to his companion.

“Your protégé is to make his début to-night, I hear. Aren’t you interested in seeing what he is making of the life you helped save?”

“Bah, no! Come on!”

“I am. So long!” Leaving his comrade, Mevin reached the church almost as soon as the Landells, taking a rear seat where he could feast his eyes on the profile of Agnes, and watch the lobe of her dainty ear, which, for him, possessed irresistible attraction.

The service was as Tom had predicted—the usual wheezy singing; the breathy, inarticulate prayers; the inane pauses, filled, not with the dignity of silence, but with sleepy indifference on the part of some who were half-drugged with the lack of ventilation and wanted to go home, and with terror on the part of others who thought they should ‘testify,’ but did not dare.

"Who will speak a word for the Lord? Brothers and sisters, do not hide your one talent! Rise and testify!" said the leader of the meeting,—for, on the plea that he could become better acquainted with the members, by mingling with them, this first evening, Philip had not opened the services, but sat beside the speaker's desk, his eyes burning with the intensity of his agony.

"Will some one tell me how many cups are in the pantry of the church?" Agnes' clear voice rang through the audience room.

"I am sure you will not consider the question inappropriate when I explain."—This she added in response to the leader's astounded expression—"It appears to me that these teacups and the whole church property are like the one talent, and the church body very like the servant who buried it. They should be called upon to testify, as you have asked us to do. There is a factory over the hill, where seventy-five fine girls work. They have been spending their noon hours in the dust-filled rooms. Recently, to their great delight and benefit, the owner of the factory provided lunches and a rest-room for them, procuring, at some expense, what we have locked in these pantries. Just outside this building, half a hundred men, the brawn of our country, at work on our highways, are eating from pails on the curbstone or on gravel piles, because this 'garden of the Lord' so close at hand is enclosed in iron palings and the gates locked.

"Let us do at least as much as business men are doing,—unearth this talent, utilize this property, open the kitchen and Sunday School rooms, this beautiful grove and these pleasant parlors, for all time. As a church body, let us present the Christ Principle in the church better than ever before."

"Mr. Standing Committee,— " said little Miss Ben-

koni,—and be it remembered that she was the one, who, though praying for years in her ever-ascending scale of terror, never before had made intelligible a single word she said; but who spoke fearlessly now, in her awakening to an idea: “I thought religion meant that, when I joined the church. I am so tired helping to get up rummage sales and handing round subscription papers. Aprons and pillow slips seem more like the Lord’s work, somehow, seeing they are needful; but they don’t fill my soul. There isn’t any life behind it. We get money in ways that don’t seem right. We are always asking entertainers to give something for nothing. Little enough does it occur to us to find out if they’ve made any money that week for something to eat, let alone something to wear, at our free get-ups, and we make fun of them if they don’t dress in style. I can’t help feeling it’s putting a premium on wickedness, for they must get the clothes, somehow, to entertain us in. We do the same thing to ministers, too! Then there is something worse—and I can’t sleep nights for thinking of it—if we get up for churches and charity things we campaign against as moral pests, and are willing to stand in the vestry of the church, as we did last week, covered with sheets, all but our feet, and let those be exposed for the minister to auction off to any man that likes their shape enough to pay the biggest price for them—I can’t help feeling that whether it’s for the church or not, it’s only making the line a little longer to the point of stifling our consciences and selling our souls for gauds!”

Breathless, as she realized what she had done, the little woman sank terrified in her seat.

“Who will answer Miss Landell’s question about the cups?” In his haste to cover, what he considered these most reprehensible remarks of Miss Ben-

koni, Mr. Olney thus lost for the meeting any possibility of its return to usual procedure.

"What Miss Benkoni says is so very true!"

At once, Agnes was increasingly intense.

"We are about to enter upon a new chapter in the work of the church. Will it be in order to make this meeting a council for ways and means—not to obtain money,—that will surely come if we enter the kingdom of righteousness, first,—not for emotionalism; but for spiritual understanding?"

Mr. Olney was about to demur; but one of the younger men who had been asleep in a corner was wakened by this new quality in the proceedings, and moved that the suggestion be followed. This was seconded and Agnes went on.

"I agree with Miss Benkoni. Nowhere in life do we expect something for nothing so much as in the church. Some of you will say, we give a great deal. So some of us do. All are supposed to acquire spiritual peace and power, exhibited in better civics, purer ethics, honesty in daily dealings, and deep rich spiritual morality in our homes and daily lives. How much are we gaining these results through the church? How much through the business leagues, while we remain supine? Not as individuals, but as a church, how well are we protecting our neighbors' reputations; respecting our neighbors' opinions and problems, and helping unfold character when the task seems more than individuals can accomplish? How much does the church direct, not only in preaching, but in practice, the guiding of our tongues, that we think and speak no guile, as we meet together? Primarily, through the influence of the church, how many refuse to listen to scandal or to read or converse wantonly?"

"We wouldn't have any sewing circles in short order," tittered old Mrs. Tice. "There's folks here

wouldn't like to have to hold up their hands as to who always greets the newcomer with 'What's the news?' meaning the last scandal."

"Religion hasn't been what I expected when I was converted twenty years ago, under the grape arbor," quavered Brother Lapham. "We have not been sleepless in watching lest the devil steal our souls!"

"Brother Lapham, does that arbor still have grapes?" asked Mrs. Burton.

Mr. Lapham shrank back into his seat with an ominous frown and was silent.

Philip Herman looked down at his mother. The calm that rarely deserted her was with her now. Her face was illumined. As Agnes' clear tones continued to electrify the meeting, turning it from the irresponsibility he had so dreaded, a change came over his mobile face.

"Let us thoughtfully confront our methods," she was saying. "Already, Miss Benkoni has noted two. Next to the constant suggestion of something for nothing, is the suggestion rather than the teaching—of giving for personal gain. Children are teased into Sunday School for Christmas gifts; to sociables, for a free feed,—they call it that!—Under promise of earthly and heavenly gifts and freedom from responsibilities every normal man and woman should rejoice in, many are urged to confess to what they know they have not experienced. Too seldom, is taught the moral accountability of the individual to himself; his home; the church as promoter of spiritual welfare; the world; the universe. The teaching of many church bodies is a hysterical demand to give up all,—which one cannot do, for we move and have being in God.

"We are taught to cast our sins upon a defenceless brother, which, besides teaching brutal selfishness, is impossible, for our actions make our lives.

"What can we church members expect of servants and employees, when we accept the doctrine of evasion of our deeds and obligations. When we shout thoughtlessly 'Jesus Paid it All,' and 'Jesus Died for Me,' is it any wonder that the habit of grab and keep becomes ingrained into instead of trained out of us? Willingly we accept vicarious atonement from our fathers and mothers and friends and believe we have a right to do so, thus lessening both capacity and desire to be the saviour instead of the saved! Jesus came to show us how to do what He did, rather than to accept what He did! 'He did not come to teach us to save our souls from a lost world; but to set our souls to save the world.' Our attempts to cast aside our obligations are futile. They rise and grip us till a righteous sowing gives us the reaping of holiness."

"She will take away my Saviour who died for me," wailed an old woman. "I love to think of Jesus, dying on the cross and saving me from the consequences of my sins."

"Love to think of Jesus dying on the cross for you! That is self love,—the desire for self-preservation. Bitterest hate could devise nothing more vicious!"

Mrs. Peebles looked frightened. Then a ray of comprehension softened the hard contour of her face.

"It does sound so, now you put it that way! Where did the idea come from?"

"From our child-understanding. Truth is too great for us to comprehend in full. Most converts to a new idea bring to bear upon it their preconceived notions. The early Christians apprehended the truth but comprehended only according to their spiritual growth. That is why intellectual and physical efficiency have unfolded wars and brutality. The intellect conceives ideas of its own. There is One. We are God's ideas, and, understood, they never conflict.

Mind, Intelligence, are but part unfoldments toward the universal unity and the Universal Presence. Every text in the Bible is a personal message,—

“ ‘For other foundation, no man can lay, than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.’ ”

“ ‘Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, *now*, know we Him *so*, no more.’ ”

There was silence. The Presence seemed to move among them. The light played over Agnes' face and she seemed a very aroma of truth in a garden of materialism. At the head of a new page in his note-book Mevin made a register in a bold decisive hand, never turning his eyes from the slender figure who stood fearlessly before him, or removing his mind from the soul of her.

“Father,” said Tom in horrified undertones, as the company dispersed and, naturally, Mevin and Agnes fell behind, “what possessed her! She wishes Herman to succeed, yet, if I am any guesser, her words will induce a cataclysm.”

“She is thinking of the liberty of God,” and Tom, finding that his father did not intend to criticize his daughter, decided to follow his example; so wisely, fell to thinking of Mattee Sue.

The next day, Mr. Landell sought his wife. He found her in the morning room arranging flowers.

“Helen, Agnes suggests that we remain here this winter instead of going to town. What do you say?”

“Daniel!” Mrs. Landell dropped the roses to throw her hands out with a gesture of disapprobation. “She is interested in that preacher! For a woman of her temperament to become a minister's wife,—we might as well lay her away from the very church, that, to my mind, is responsible for her nervous condition. Were I to listen, regularly, to that theology—and believe it—

(and I do not speak with intent to cavil or to jeer) my 'bowels of compassion' would be so disturbed, and my emotional expression so unbalanced, I should have silent or *outloud* hysteria and a wholly distorted sense of relations and values; not through any dispensation of Providence, but as the result of inharmonious thinking. Such temptation is dangerous for her."

"You were born into a communion with a liberal interpretation of life, Helen. I wonder if you have any conception of the suffering borne by temperaments like those of Agnes, Herman and myself, as, one by one, theological landmarks, hitherto considered static, resolve into the flux and flow of progress. The seasons of blindness as to processes are heart-breaking. I feel like agreeing with Agnes and remaining here to help Herman. The horrors of Erebus were in his eyes, last night, and Agnes turned the scale for him. The Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man were acknowledged in that church, as never before, and the people were glad of it."

"You don't mean to say that, after what has happened, *you* would go back into that church, do you? I don't mean you are not great enough to do it, but you could not gain ingress there. You might present your *body*; but your mind and opinions would be ostracised."

"Mine might, yes; but God's, no. If the time has come, which it had not in the times to which you refer, for bud to succeed stem, the growth will appear, and I may in some way serve as sunshine or rain. At all events, I can give Agnes the support she needs."

"With your knowledge of that membership, you do not think they will accept what she said last night!"

"James Freeman Clarke's statement of faith has, for years, been losing its identity as a Unitarian tenet,—"

"Yes, because, stealthily, by some, blatantly, by

others, it has been abstracted and reformed into the statements of other beliefs."

"It is leavening the whole and all but a few are glad to see themselves emerging from limitations of sect. Its truth belongs to us all, whoever formulated it."

"We cannot deny a sense of injustice when told that our congregations do not grow, and we know it is because other sects have claimed the spirit of our institutions in interpretation and phraseology. They remain in the havens of conservatism—the churches in which they were born—and hoist the petards, we, with stress and strain, have borne to their fortresses. Though the attacks upon us are less fierce, since there are more blasphemous cults to contend against in their imaginings, we still have a share to sustain. We find it inconceivable that the average congregation is ignorant that they accept from their Dr. A. on B. Street, interpretations of principle they would reject if they knew that Dr. D. on J. Street had been teaching them for many years."

"Unitarianism is not a finality, it is a manner of looking at life; a movement, bearing those in its currents steadily through the spirals of growth, from discrimination of values, where Agnes is struggling, through hatred and disgust where Herman evidently is, through control, tolerance, endurance, faith and balance, to spiritual recognition of Conscious Reality."

"Those people are not sufficiently advanced on the spiral, to give up their man-given heritage of wormhood—an easy idea to express!—They will contend that appreciation of man and of other Christs in history is depreciation of Jesus. They will not recognize that it was unity that enabled Jesus,—enables all of us,—to act joyfully for those we love, and to be sure that we are not doing it because of some emotional idea of martyring ourselves. It makes Jesus far

more wonderful than the other conception, for He was willing, through a perfect correspondence between a perfect idea and a perfect expression, to objectify that the Only Begotten Son, is Truth."

"The consciousness of thousands is being awakened to the meanings of life, as reaching beyond the confines of the physical," responded Mr. Landell. "Even persecutions and diseases are assuming mental phases, and the torch-bearers are realizing that devils of mental quality are no more superior and far more subtly dangerous and soul-attacking than those that dogma has cloaked with physical embodiments. Much misunderstanding is due to the quibbling of words, anyway."

"The end will be, Agnes will fall in love with that man. She is in the torments of self-condemnation, for which I cannot blame her,—such a stupid and uncalled-for proceeding, to drag him before the public as a pauper! To me, the worst of it is, that at the same time, she flung herself before the limelight, and in the horribly cheap attitude of medium or seer—"

"The one belongs to the dependent, the other to the interdependent stage of consciousness; one, to the stage of control, or subjection, the other, to that of coöperation or coördination with the forces of the Infinite."

"Her desire to atone for her error," Mrs. Landell skillfully drew her husband from the consideration of abstract principle, to that of their ewe lamb, "will impel her toward him. Oh, I can see the whole horrible tragedy! She loves to be crucified!"

"You need not fear. It was plain, that day at the lodge, that he resents her assistance and will in no sense attract—"

"Oh, you men—Daniel!—The more his manner repels the more her self-abnegation will form a halo about his head. His position of saviour of souls will

add to this gloria, and she will not know until too late that true marriage is not established on any such false basis! Those whose minds are set on *sacrifice* lose all perspective. I told you so," gathering the broken stems of flowers in her hands, "there he is, coming up the driveway, now!"

CHAPTER XIII.

*"We want no star, my Queen,
To show the way we're going,
We need no fairy harp to play
We need no flowers, our pathway strowing,
For love, himself, will guide our feet,
For love is all our going."*

AGNES and Ross Mevin were sitting, this September afternoon, under the larches in the Landells' rare old garden. So full of sweet communion was the place they had fallen upon silence, which is no least part of conversation. He was watching her with quickening heart beats, as the sunbeams stole under the branches and played upon her hair. Fir needles dropped upon them as they sat, overlooking the hills and forests. The clouds were reflected in the still lake. The woods were flecked with sunshine and shadow.

"I wonder what meaning those waters hold within their depths," with idle delight, Mevin rested his eyes upon the panorama.

"As well try to pierce the Sybilline prophecies. I seek and seek, but no answer comes."

"Do not seek!" A world of tenderness was in his tones. "Don't you recall the little verse you wrote and repeated to me one night in the moonlight?"

"Tell it to me?" There was a winsome wistfulness in her speech.

Mevin repeated flowingly,

*"The seed I've sought so long to find,
I seek no longer. I have found.
It's in my heart. Now, with my mind,
I have but need to till the ground."*

His beautiful voice, having rested appreciatively and encouragingly upon the words, ceased.

"How worth while you make it sound!" She was silent, turning her head and looking toward the lake, where, across the fields, by the side of a silvery thread of water, the reflections of gray birches and waving poplars cast soft shadows on the backs of browsing cattle.

"Listen to the air spirit!" she breathed.

Above, below, and all about them, was the music of life's voice. Now at their feet, amid the roots and in the chambers of the ground; now amid waving grasses; now in the branches, and, higher still, among the clouds; sinking into silence, yet pulsing with vital power. It whispered into her ear, then fluttered over to Mevin, and murmured unutterable joyousness, filling the heart of one with a passionate love for life universal; of the other with an agony of adoration for the special life he held so dear.

He loved to watch the little tendril of hair curl about the dainty ear; to touch her hand, if chance permitted so rare a delight; to hear her voice, though, sometimes, while watching her, her words mingled indistinguishably with its sweet melody reaching the recesses of his heart, as, not with ears, he listened to what she said. He loved to watch her forehead, behind which sat enthroned noble ideals. He loved her! He loved her! How illusive she was—like the mimosa—withdrawing from him, even while the fragrance of her personality intoxicated him. What should he do to draw her to him!

The delicious suggestions of the trixy spirit availed little,—at least to outward appearances,—though both felt the insistent fluttering of its ecstasy and finally Mevin voiced it.

"How strangely like a spirit is the summer wind. It incites one to the fulfilment of waking dreams."

Another pause! A red-breast flitted near, the clouds sent prismatic colorings into the atmosphere, the air-spirit whispered yet again into their ears and lingered lovingly in Agnes' glistening hair.

"Speaking of fulfilment—" when he spoke, it was as in continuation of some thought he felt she would follow without explanation—"makes me think, by contrast, I lost my case yesterday."

"Not the bank case that is to make you famous?" At once, Agnes was all sympathy.

"That comes later. This is fraught with significance only as it presents the war of ignorance with wisdom."

"Tell me about it."

"To strengthen the credit of a friend, a little woman deeded her farm to him for a period of time. The paper was issued 'with consideration,' and, the crisis past, the property was returned, without consideration,—a lapse the little woman did not recognize. The old man died, and the heirs took advantage of the omission to claim the property. I had the case. The proof on her side was so convincing, I had no thought of defeat. It was tried in a little town in the hills. Making a cursory review of the matter, the judge turned to my client brusquely,

"'They say you are a spiritualist. Are you?'

"'I place no limit on God,' was her response. 'We are souls and one with the Infinite Eternal. The phase called death has no power to disintegrate spirit. I believe in the communion of saints.'

"'That is no reply,' returned the judge. 'Such a person cannot expect the protection of the court.' With this recommendation, of course, the jury entered verdict against her."

"It is pathetic," sighed the listener.

"Agnes!" Mevin leaned forward, unconscious of the use of her given name, in this moment of mutual understanding, "the experience comes to me, each time with the same crushing bitterness, that so-called good men and women array themselves, less according to their lights than their darkness."

"Do you believe with your client?" Agnes, too, leaned forward, intensely.

"My thought is," he meditated, "that steps in this life, now visible to you are dark to me. The lifting of the veil is arbitrary."

"The only veil is immaturity. Do you not think so?"

"I do. Laboratories for proving continuity of life and possibilities of communion in different phases and states seem as funny to me as to attempt to raise the Matterhorn with a child's trowel."

"Except, as the attempt to visualize the belief one cannot see, is a step toward the maturity when no longer one sees through a glass, darkly."

"It is the search for the soul germ, I acknowledge; but that does not thrive when layer after layer is torn from it. These must be moved aside from within?"

"Still, a child learns of mountains while playing with sand and clay in the kindergarten. When he sees the Matterhorn, he realizes that, after all, what he built, though not a mountain, was teaching him essentials concerning it."

"So shall it be, that the scientist, who must put the finger into the nail-hole manifestation, grows through active methods of research?"

"Laboratories for psychical discoveries prove to the materialist, so-called, what the poet, prophet and seer know through inner vision; but the scientist, whose real is so often the temporal, still deals in phenomena,

when he approaches the psychic, which is more nearly on the material than the spiritual plane of the One Energy."

"The scientist 'brings the angel down'—to paraphrase Dryden, while the prophet, poet and seer 'raise the mortal to the skies.' Talk about *different states*," he continued, "we do not *see* each other here, because embodied in flesh. Walking up and down the garden path arm in arm does not signify similar states of being. What does!"

"The growth of consciousness. That brings us into the white light of understanding, where we are revealed to those who are in that light, and who, through that pure medium, respond to our thought and mood and need."

"Then light is the revealer of the continuity of life and the medium of communion? What leads us into Light?"

"The moment aspiration lives in us, the soul rises, its Light has come. The quality of the aspiration is the standard for the soul's expression through various phases of understanding, even as sin is a matter of standards and standards are a matter of growth." She changed the subject abruptly. "How did Judith go? Tell me honestly? I do not want flattery."

"I could not flatter you if I would. You bring your own band of messengers, demanding truth. It was wonderful; but—" he hesitated, "when you called, 'Fly, Assyrians, fly,' it was not *you!*"

Agnes' face flamed crimson, then grew deadly pale.

"Tell me what it was! I am afraid! Afraid! May I confide in you? I would not wish Alicia's teacher ever to know. I cannot even tell Tom. He would call it *nerves*. It is strange, that, with all his research, he still claims that to be the cause of my phenomena."

"Many who think much, do not realize that 'the

development of the power of spirit is one thing and spiritual unfoldment another! ” ”

“ I believe Tom thinks ignorance safer for me. It is not. It is better to know,— if one may. I never can thank you enough for telling me what you did one day. It has made me awake to what I was groping for. Even now, I can feel the power that came to my rescue as a child, when—almost in the clutches of that gardener’s influence—as you convinced me was the cause of that outbreak—I threw off the influence and reinstated the only power—the power of God! ”

“ The only Power! ” he repeated, as if impressing the words upon his heart, “ the only Power! ”

“ I am beginning to feel safe, instead of so afraid all the time. I believe I am coming into the light. ”

“ Of course you are, white soul! ” He waited tenderly till she came to her story, her own way.

“ I feel safer, because I understand that what I have called my moods— ”

“ I have long known them to be more than that— ”

“ Are the times I am being seized upon by darkness and the light comes not. But it always comes—it always has come. I see, now, that I have never lost it. Could I have done any better, had I understood? She told him of that terrible fight, on the night of her Judith recital.

“ Probably, not so well. You were following the God of your fathers, not the rules of a metaphysician,” he said, himself growing as he held out his hand to comfort her.

“ There are many who think I have nothing to make me sad or ill—at least, far less than many who make life merry; but, in these ways, I am in battle continually for the supremacy of my soul. I will surrender it to no influence, carnate or discarnate other than God—but how to tell what is God? ”

"Have you ever failed?"

"Shall I ever know? I do not see that I have; yet I may be blind. But what guides me? Why did I resent this inundation and the unconscious mental interference of my Cousin Matilda and the insurging demands—again I believe, unintentional on his part—of the gardener? I could understand were it hypnotic in the sense of its being intentional."

"It is intentional, I have no doubt, though maybe not directed. It is a subtle determination to shift responsibilities on to others, it matters not who, or to gain, no matter from whom."

"I gladly greeted the presence of Mattee Sue, and was frightened only when I realized that the phenomenon was unusual."

"Because of the power of selection inherent and constantly trained in you. You know it was not your sister who endeavored to possess you during the presentation of Judith. I feel it was the projection of the intense thought of another mind, probably that of the teacher who loved Alicia, and whose thought was bent on her. She would have much preferred seeing her than you; even if she saw her through you. Doubtless you, too, had the sweet sister in mind more than you realized. I feel sure that is so. Dear heart, fear not."

"You don't believe it was a demoniacal spirit,—one of the Assyrians?" She turned and trembled.

"Never admit such a thought in the holy temple of your being," warned Mevin. "Dear friend, *fear not!* Your psychic forces mean your own forces acting within you, constantly changing your manifestation. Universal forces play in you; but not to act, until you acknowledge their leadership. Some you are cognizant of, as, through the senses—not with the senses—you know the face of a friend, the color of her hair,

the odor of the rose she wears. Some forces you are cognizant of through senses of which you are just now learning. When psychic forces like concentration, meditation, realization begin to make themselves consciously and discriminately known to you, your fear of them makes their call come in pain. When you trust them, they come in enlightenment, because born and bred in love, which, in its perfection, casts out fear."

"What you say is so true. The first sense of unity with our fellows is often terrifying."

"Coöperation and harmony correlate forces into final unity."

"So, we shall find our sensitiveness moving in spirals of life towards the fulfilment of our own."

"Psychic does not mean relation with the so-called dead, alone. It means our interrelation with all life. Messages come to us as to a central station. It is for us to decide what we shall do with them,—but you are far beyond me. Why should I tell you these things!"

"I am not beyond you. We are climbing to the hilltops by different paths, and stop to exchange salutations and ask directions—"

"And some of us may walk together soul to soul."

"I am far from being as advanced as you seem to believe. I accept much intellectually that I cannot demonstrate. The real soul vision, born of perception and realization, is an advanced growth, but I am not at all sure that this phenomenal, apparitional, and symbolical expression is any more advanced than are the hieroglyphics and pictures by which children are taught. I want my knowledge to be evidential. The other is little better than the mixed, inarticulate utterances of primitive peoples. I seek the true spiritual foresight, by which 'events cast their shadows before.'

When these experiences face me, I always say, 'I want to help; what is it?' "

"Would it be as well to say, 'What is it and I will see if I want to help'?"

"I should have thought of that and did not! Why?"

"Because we need each other in sweet interrelation-ship. Truth is too mighty to discern alone. Even the stone at our feet, some one else may turn, that we may see the gem sparkling in the geode."

"Sensitiveness should not make us touchy, should it! It should enable us to hear the music of all strings tuned to the keynote of life. It should coördinate the instrument with the thought and action it is to express; to find new harmonies in seeming dissonance, not to hold us fast to the combinations we are aware of! It should be great enough to harmonize all things, not with us as the ultimate, but with the keynote of Universal Unity. Attuned to that, we ring out a message of affiliation with all that is good."

"Good afternoon, Miss Landell," an indolent and interesting voice interrupted. "Are you at home? Ah, Mevin, sitting at heaven's gate? Make the most of your opportunity. It is as near as you and I will ever get, I fancy."

"Oh, Dr. Brentford!"

Cordially, Agnes greeted the young physician, while Mevin straightened unnecessarily.

"I suppose they had you on the seat of repentance the other night when you went to prayer meeting, Mevin," Brentford turned to his friend. "I never went to one of those moving-picture shows but once. Then, I knelt with a lot of others so I could squeeze the hand of a girl I had taken a fancy to. She had never let me touch it before, but this night she squeezed it back. I suppose she thought it religious fervor.

How is the young minister, Miss Landell? Is he still living on huckleberries turned into cash?"

Agnes quivered.

"Will he ever forgive me for making his necessities the subject of a berry party!" she gasped.

"He should be so complimented at your forecasting the future for him that he would overlook the little pleasantry of being published. If I were he, I could sooner forgive that than being dragged back into this hypocritical old world just as I saw a decent chance to slip out. I wouldn't worry about it!"

"I can *feel* that he is not forgiving me for being so crude in my methods."

"Is it, perhaps, that you do not forgive yourself? You know what you told me about your discipline," said Mevin.

"Perhaps so," Agnes responded, drearily.

"Surely, you shouldn't fret, and for mercy's sake, don't discipline yourself. Life does that sufficiently without our taking time and strength to formulate any curriculum," said Brentford, carelessly. "We are all going to the lake to-night, to see the eclipse, aren't we?"

Mevin responded in the affirmative, forestalling a possible invitation on the part of Brentford, by adding,

"Miss Landell, will you go with me?"

Agnes accepted the invitation, and as the men rose to go, she stepped into the light so beautiful a picture, that both their hearts quickened perceptibly.

"Smashing woman, Miss Landell," remarked Brentford, as they walked towards the hotel. "It's a pity she should worry herself to death because she has done a man a kindness. Where did she get the idea he doesn't like it? From her imagination, I expect, or some more of that mind-extension business of hers. She reads too much. I never supposed a minister

would mind a little thing like being nursed and taken care of. Life doesn't afford much sensitiveness to that sort of thing. If she is queer and sees farther than some, she must pay the price. She's a puzzle."

"Almost as much as Brentford," returned Mevin.

"Oh, he's not much of a one, given the key. Like Herman, he is only a victim of ill-advised charity, which, in his case, instead of being dispensed in huckleberry saucers, came from an uncle who stole his patrimony, and, incidentally, respect for his class and for charity-mongers in general.

"Come, old fellow, it isn't even medically scientific to draw conclusions from one case,—"

"Those girls look smart, don't they!" Abruptly, Brentford changed the subject by nodding toward two young women, who, in picturesque sport clothes, were descending the steep pine-shaded avenue, with oars across their shoulders.

"Here come the hordes from the city," he continued, as the level lake road became alive with arrivals from the train; motors, victorias and saddle horses with some pedestrians, moving up the hill, where, through the vista of avenue, light and shade gamboled together, and the lake sparkled into view, gleaming like jewels through the velvet of hemlock boughs.

"I wonder how many they have *done* to-day," he went on, cynically. "By the way, did you hear about Silox and Presby? Presby is a deacon, you know. It seems he won a cool hundred from Silox, Saturday afternoon, on Presby's back porch, under cover of a friendly game of poker. Silox felt pretty sore about it from the first; but it was nothing to his feelings when he went by Presby's, Sunday afternoon. Presby was holding a prayer meeting on the memorable spot. As Silox hove in sight, Presby spied him, and struck up the hymn, 'The Lord Will Provide.' I thought

Silox would choke with rage. It was all I could do to keep him from rushing on to the piazza and yelling, 'It isn't the Lord, in this case, it is that idiot of a Hezekiah Silox, to the tune of a hundred a hand.' I don't know what made me stop him. The excitement would have been so exhilarating. Going in to dress? I'll see you later."

Soon after dinner, the boating party descended the steps leading from the hotel grounds and gathered at the lake side. The mystical silence of nature was sharply stilettoed by the piercing whir of the katydids, and from their ambuscades of tree stumps, trailing vines and fallen leaves the crickets voiced their capitulation to the forces of the fall. It was too early for the moon; but the west flamed with color, shooting across the heavens in forking tongues of rose and gold. The heavenly beauty of the scene precluded conversation.

Loosed from their moorings, the boats glided past the birches and the heavier beech and chestnut trees, to a part of the lake where pines towered and hemlocks swept the brown carpet of its border. More and more indistinct grew the petulance of the katydids and the wailing of the crickets for the vanished summer.

The lake lay like a canvas spread before the painter Night. Little by little, he limned mellowing shadows upon the sun-illuminated waters, sombrely intensifying their beauty. An opalescent twilight chastened the barbaric splendor of the scene.

Lengthening from the forest on the western shore, darkness stole along the surface of the waters. From the northern bank, the borders of the lake became outlined with foliated adumbrant curves, merging into the reflection of the woodlands on the east. Sharper grew the etching of branches and of leaves, of sky

and of clouds, upon the deep light with silvery sheen; wider, the border of reflected leaf and flower, till forest and sky lay pictured in the water world as in the world of air, encircling the centre of the lake, lying crystal clear. Into this unshadowed centre, the oarsmen rowed, and, with shipped oars, sat silent, while they who had come to watch the passing of the moon through earth's shadow awaited the phenomenon.

A wood thrush upon the shore poured forth a flood of liquid melody, then lapsed into silence and no sound was heard but the drip, drip, drip of the suspended oars.

Awe enfolded even those of trivial mind in the group of watchers, as an ebbing, flowing halo throbbed along the eastern sky, veiled as by smoke; behind which, burned, sombrely, a lurid flame. This grew luminous and undulant as the moon like a straw of gold appeared cushioned on a pillow of turquoise blue. Broadening swiftly to a segment, then into a full-globed, golden orb, she swept into the cerulean. Little by little, the flame-lighted blackness seemed to presage her annihilation, as earth, sweeping on her path, eclipsed her.

Even as the watchers gazed, they saw, peeping, from the mass of seeming fire mist, a little glint of gold.

A gentle breeze moved through the forest as earth passed on, and thread by thread, band by band, segment by segment, the moon became visible, shining down upon the open space of waters. The waves glistened; the rising breeze died away; the wood thrush wakened in the lightening darkness and poured forth one glorious echoing cadenza, then fell again to sleep, lulled by the ecstasy of his song. The pines bowed their heads to voices men could not hear, and the hemlocks sent incense, from nature's sacred altar, into the sweet fall air.

"I am glad there has been painted, for my memory, so beautiful a night!" said Mevin to Agnes, after the party, having left the lake, had gone their ways. "From its witchery and beauty, I shall bear into my life and work something ineffaceable."

He stopped to assist her over a place in the road where the electric light shone with too dazzling directness, then continued regretfully,

"To-day closes for me one of the most restful, helpful and beautiful vacations I have ever known. The October glory lures me more than the summer's loveliness; but my playtime is over. To-morrow, I go back to my old life, that will never be the same. I must seek new moorings, and feel, as never before, like a mariner lost upon a trackless sea."

Agnes turned pale. She walked some distance in silence.

"How very lonely I shall be. Tell me, before you go, why the old moorings no longer serve, and what compass you are taking with you on this new voyage,—the same as mine?"

"We mix metaphors—we imaginative ones who live in the land of dreams we try to impel into realities. Just now, instead of being a seaman at the prow, looking for land, I am feeling like a patient in the hands of a wise and kindly physician. How beautiful to consult with such a one as you. To talk of oneself to the general is like putting oneself in the hands of the average Heidelberg student, who has been to the morgue to select a cadaver. Yes, oh kindly physician, I suppose my conception of life has been that of the average man; but only recently have I realized how wofully elementary. What is it to be a good man? Already I neither smoke nor swear nor drink; but we are scarcely more than at the beginning of the unfoldment of our powers when we

have corrected such habits. I try to keep fully alive my sense of moral accountability and have rather prided myself on my well-rounded character; but suddenly I feel like an uninflated toy balloon. What is there for me to do! Certainly at my age I have not compassed all of life; but I can see ahead only a little more grab and a little more get. I do not want to hunt for things to do. I want things demanded of me."

"Are we not passing beyond the crude stage in which separate traits are affected by deliberate intent? It is only children—in age or unfoldment—whom we admonish to control the temper. The mature character has entered into the comprehension that every trait is interdependent with every other trait and that the whole of the inner man calls for balance."

"How can I unfold interdependent traits equally and make myself of value in the working world? That is what we men face, Agnes," his voice caressed the name. "The one-ideaed, the one-sided man seems to gain in this world. I can find as much to say on one side as another. But if I do it how can I plead a case? I cannot. I believe so truly in the right of the individual that I hesitate to influence minds as capable as mine of thinking," he continued. "You notice I did not urge you to do Judith, that long-to-be-remembered night. I would not for the world come between you and your judgment. Perhaps you thought I did not care to hear you?"

"I did," said Agnes, contritely. "What lessons you are teaching me."

"Not I! I want you to help me! Do you hear!" His tones were almost rough in their intensity. "If I refuse to use influence, what becomes of my place! It is a blank! Your church people, whom you arraigned last night, would tell me to believe on the Lord Jesus

Christ and be saved! What is belief! It presupposes doubt! What is it to be saved? From what! It is all a quibble of words! Belief is indefinite and indefiniteness does not construct character! To believe that Jesus makes it for us is to acknowledge ourselves effigies instead of men. I am far more certain of some so-called intangibles than of many facts accepted by the schoolmen who will repudiate them as soon as the next text-books are printed. I have glimmerings of unknown shapes and shadows—phases of life, larger and finer. Like you, I have consciousness of much I can neither place nor grasp. I want to be truthful; but what is truth? Three times this month, in response to business questions, I have been impelled to give answers which in view of my objective knowledge were false; but which subsequently proved correct. Are we not, then, captains of our souls, but in the battle-field to be made prisoners of war!”

“You helped me this afternoon by telling me the very things you are waiting to have me tell you now. We assure by our own assurance, don’t we!”

“You do, because yours is of the right sort! May I go on with this confession?”

Her eyes answered him.

“I want to be a tremendous success in my profession; but to bend all energies to that personal issue is to warp the universal in me. I seek wisdom rather than opinion; truth rather than argument. As the ultimate of truth is unreachable until the entire consciousness is unfolded, this habit of mine looks, to the positives, as if I never decide anything finally—which I don’t. Yet, I think I am very decided in action. Can you explain the paradox?”

“I can understand it.”

“What becomes of leadership if every adjustment entails total readjustment?”

"It becomes coöperation—"

"How can I ask men to enlist under my banner when, at any moment, in the light of new vision, I may pull it down and hoist another?"

"A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds. With consistency, a great mind has nothing to do," quoted Agnes. "Or, to quote further, 'The future does not belong to the certain people.' Why not pin your faith on principle and know that demonstration must follow. After all, is consistency very different from viewing the heavens through a magnifying glass bought for fifteen cents at a department store, instead of through a Lick Observatory telescope?"

"Already, I am applying a different lens to my heavens. I have not been setting my needle to the north; but have been guiding my course out of the harbor by the electric lights along the shore. Still, I assert, I do not know what goodness is!" He straightened his broad shoulders and ran his fingers through his hair with a winning gesture. "I don't mean, alone, with regard to these matters of daily living,—though what other sort is there than daily, for every day brings a new day?—but in regard to matters you opened my mind to, not so long ago in point of time, but long ago in terms of growth. Tell me, Agnes, if there is no personal God—and I do not believe there is—what is the Maker of this governing principle of which we speak so glibly—and of what consequence is this that we call prayer? You know I asked you that day you taught me there is a vision for those who see."

Agnes lifted her face. Her soul shone in her eyes.

"I have no moorings. Would I had." He stumbled, blindly, on the curbstone.

"I know so little myself; but I have won my way inch by inch. Sometimes, for months there has been blank despair; then a line, a phrase, a starbeam falling

on a greensward, a voice, has led me on 'o'er crag and torrent,' till now, though still blinded at times, I am beginning to interpret its spirit. Prayer is an energetic desire. It creates a form of which it is the life, and, through its energy, man becomes conscious of his oneness with All."

"I wonder how many of our desires are sufficiently vitalized to create form. I fear many are abortions."

"Soulless desires disintegrate—are dissipated through lack of concentrative force to hold them together."

"That is answer to the query why, at least, some of our prayers are not evidenced. Go on."

"Many prayers are on the instinct plane. Rising from this, comes the desire to promote the moral and intellectual being. Ideas formed on the thought plane react directly on the one who forms the prayer and establishes conscious communion with the Source of Life. When man becomes conscious of his need for growth he has found the keynote of Universal Life. There sings through his entire being that his Redeemer liveth and that in his flesh shall he see God.

"Then rises within him not a petition but pure worship of God. No longer does Jehovah seem a merchant of the heavens shoveling shoes and sugar down upon the faithful. The spirit leaps beyond its one-time bounds, revealing to us the Christ incarnate in each soul, born of God, manifesting man, one with the Father."

"I told you it would come, and it has, even in teaching me." The light in his face was beautiful, as he realized that she was revealing unto her very self, the Christ. But a shadow crept over her's.

"Yes, but I mean the dear little Jesus who lived so long ago, in Galilee. How is His blood our life and our salvation? He seems to me a huge composite of

agonies which it is disintegrating to the emotions to contemplate and to the integrity to give expression to. Even viewed intellectually He is an aggregate of the best that had been made manifest up to the time of His coming—not perfection, for perfect strength could not have been translated by any souls then incarnate.”

“You seemed to understand that evening in the prayer-meeting.”

“I realize in a sense, but do not understand each step.”

“It will come,” reiterated Mevin, softly, “even as the other. Tell me more about prayer?”

“Prayer does not raise action above the plane of one’s consciousness; but, being an active force, causes the extension of consciousness in the direction of nobler and finer expression. In moments when the mind is fixed on God, His secrets are revealed. His disciples, pure in heart, see God.”

“Then constantly to hold the sense of completeness is prayer? It recharges our potential energy, through itself revealing the answer,” said Mevin, slowly pondering. “We realize that nothing not already in the purpose of God’s will can be longed for or needed by us. It is in Being. It is for us to make manifest.”

“I know, that, for me, the next unfolding step is consciously to harmonize and make interdependent, traits which, combined with manifestation, make the man; unifying present unfoldment with present intelligence, and harmonizing it with the foreshadowed one of spiritual consciousness.”

Her face became white with a peculiar radiance.

“Mr. Mevin, we are emanations of God. Our latent power is infinite for it is the unfolding power of God. The more these latent possibilities are made manifest, the more God is revealed, the Father through the Son,

and the more it is proved that the Father and I are One."

She ceased speaking and her face became "translucent to the flame that burns within."

They walked the gentle incline to the great gates of steel, the tracery of whose pattern lay in stencilled shadows upon the moonlit driveway.

"I am wondering how and where to direct my intelligence and desire that my life may become an expressed prayer that will be worth while."

"The world is waiting for men who can build a lasting state with the everlasting qualities of courage and aspiration."

"I am mentioned for the legislature. Have I the moral right—I have the courage—to take a special platform when there is so much of truth on every side—so much ill to uphold, or good to deny, whichever side one declares for."

"The state needs men with moral power like yourself, to raise official positions to planes of high achievement."

"I wish I could bring myself into the court of high desire—desire to be—but a politician—"

"It is poor being that does not culminate in doing."

"Yes; but so much of our doing shows lack of being," Mevin smiled half sadly, half amused. "It is of little more use than the motions of my Aunt Jerusha. If she takes a trip to Worcester, for an afternoon's shopping, she makes a dozen lists, beginning a week in advance, packs her bag the night before, and reaches the station an hour ahead of time—and I greatly resemble my Aunt Jerusha—at least in my love-making," he completed the sentence to himself, for the house was within a few yards, the morrow measured distance and time and space for them, and

the desire of his soul was not attained. "Dear heart, will you—"

"Be a politician in the highest sense of the word." Agnes was tantalizingly beautiful as her vision of, and her desire for, his transfiguration from a man of selfish action to one of service made her unconscious to his plea for her love.

"Not yet!" he sighed. "Not yet! Still there must be something personal in her interest, or she would not be so eager to buckle on my sword and shield. Nonsense," with sudden jealousy, "she heard a stronger call from that man on the hill."

"Yes," Agnes was saying, "he who shows moral greatness in a position that misuse has covered with obloquy, and, through it, correlates thousands to the universal purpose—he is a good man."

There was silence. Even the night wind was still; but as they entered the loggia, a rising breeze caught her lace scarf. It caressed his hand. She swayed toward him as her foot touched a slight unevenness in the way, and the air and the landscape danced dizzily before his eyes, as the trailing bit of cobweb bore with it a message over which he pondered in passionate adoration in the watches of the night.

"You have aided me to the solution of a great many problems, this summer," he said, half sadly, half joyfully, as they paused to say good-night.

"Can I help you further?" Still she was innocent of what his heart would say.

"Always you will help me."

Breathing heavily, he turned from her.

"Near me or afar, you will speak to me from your soul; but seeing myself, as through your purity you have revealed me to myself, I am going away, knowing you have not heard me plead with you, be-

cause your mind shines high in the empyrean of an ideal I have not reached."

He looked into her face. Alive as it was with the spiritual power evoked, there was an almost unbelievable ignorance as to the meaning of his words. Only love for humanity in the abstract shone from her eyes.

"I am going away to learn the language you speak, that, sometime, I may make you understand."

As he spoke lovingly, she wondered that her heart lapsed, suddenly, into the depression surely following upon her moments of exaltation. They lingered a little longer, she, conscious of the infinite about them, he, conscious only of her. He released her hand, which he had held in parting, and passed swiftly from her sight.

CHAPTER XIV.

*"On Monday I fall in love,
On Tuesday I say so,
On Wednesday I declare my suit,
On Thursday I win my sweetheart,
On Friday I make her jealous,
And on Saturday and Sunday—
I hunt for a new love."*

"TING, ting," sounded the door-bell of the pleasant Southern home one warm summer morning. "Ting, ting!"

"Snowball, run to the do'," said Mattee Sue Romaine, who, at the moment of the interruption, was wrestling with her luxuriant hair. "How I do wish I could have an *absolutely* personal maid, like mauma did befo' the wa'."

"That marvelous 'before the war,'" sighed her sister Etta, looking up with graceful indolence from the window-seat where she was reading, "when our stables were full of thoroughbreds and the fair mistress of the big house rode a palfrey in the dewy morn and an Arabian stallion in the shadowy eve. Damsels floated about ancestral halls in damask satins that stood alone and swept the marble floors. Not one but many maids would hasten to place pearls like pigeons' eggs in ears—"

"Z'Etta, do hush your extravagance!" and, with charming camaraderie, Mattee Sue interrupted her sister. "I never can utter one modest little wish, 'thout you launch forth a whole avalanche of superlatives!"

"At least, I sound some of my letters and do not

leave my ideas wholly to the listener's imagination," retorted Etta.

"The idea of *you* with your *back* trailin' about in gowns heavy enough to stand alone! An' pigeons' eggs hangin' from your ears! Z'Etta, w'at a spectacle you'd make! As for marble halls, I reckon there were deal floors befo' the wa' just as there are now."

"You are so unresponsive," reproached Etta; "Uncle Dudley says that such a reign of regal splendor and luxury never has been known since the days of the Cæsars."

"If you want to trail round in somethin' heavy, take your adjectives! They will be easier for your back and more amusin' to the public."

Mattee Sue tossed her mane of beautiful hair into its accustomed coils and laughed wickedly.

"Yes, Miss Wright told me at school that adjectives were my worst enemy," was Etta's pensive response. "Are you going to take part in the dime museum, Mattee Sue?"

"Not I! Miss Mary didn't like it because mauma wouldn't let me be a mermaid. For my part, I think it's a disgrace to be gettin' up dime museums for the Church; but Miss Mary says we mustn't be splittin' straws. She says she was not angry, only deeply wounded, because mauma refused to let me be a mermaid. Think of me, sittin' all the evenin' with my feet pasted into a paper tail! W'ere is that Snowball! Aw, Snowball! How one does have to squall! If you try to be fashionable and ring a bell, you have to squall out that you've rung it. Aren't you 'shamed, Snowball, to be so slow! Brer Wolf will eat you up one of these days, if you don't lift your feet quicker."

Snowball—so named in happy contrast to her jet-black countenance—with tantalizing deliberation, handed her sparkling little mistress a letter.

"W'at stunnin' stationery." Critically, its owner scrutinized the envelope, then opening it glanced through the contents with excited haste, bubbling with amusement that climaxed, finally, in peals of laughter. Turning to the beginning she reread it, gleams of mischief dancing in and out from her bewitching face like fairies playing hide and seek.

"Z'Etta, look at this!" finally thrusting the paper into her sister's hand, as she sat, her book having fallen from her hands, watching Mattee Sue mystified.

"What is it all about? That envelope signifies a most fascinating personality. I adore personality! It means more to me every day I live." Curiosity impelled her to cross the room to where Mattee Sue stood watching her gleefully, with her to scrutinize every detail of this messenger from a far-off land.

"There is personality enough to please even you and impudence enough to please even me," she sparkled. "The man must have written that document with a thesaurus on his knee. It's awfully easy to spot a thesaurus hunter, Z'Etta, so beware. I've caught up with you ever so many times. A dictionary is safer, besides, it bears the dignity of its weight with it. Use a dictionary, Z'Etta, not a thesaurus!"

Etta took the letter again and read the inscription. Then she turned the envelope and read the address:

"Tom Landell, Beneby, Massachusetts. It's a homely name. Where did you meet him?"

"Dr. Genung introduced us. The letter will tell you,—"

"Who is Dr. Genung,—oh,—" having, by this time, begun the perusal of the letter, Etta grew more and more absorbed, forgetting to maintain her expression of indignation with which, as an elder sister, she had felt it her duty to adorn her countenance.

"What consummate impudence! Of course you will not reply," and, reluctantly, Etta returned the letter to its owner, who at once occupied herself in reading it again.

"Certainly I shall. On such unimpeachable sponsorship, I shall hasten to reply. Did you ever hear such a string of big words in all your life! Oh, yes, of co'se you have for you never use any other kind. Mauma, I *may* answer this letter, mayn't I, dearee?" and she turned to her mother who had entered the room. "Can't you *see* that it is honest! Can't you *feel* it, mauma! Just listen!"

Mattee Sue read the letter with significant emphasis and dramatic touches of her own. Then Mrs. Romaine took it, examined the handwriting, and read it a second time.

"I like its ring," she returned, passing the sheet back to Mattee Sue.

"And I may answer it, mayn't I, dearee? He must be an aristocrat or he wouldn't follow up the genealogy of his books. That distinctly dubs him as one of the 'Who's Who' of the country."

"It hall-marks him as a curiosity box," scoffed Etta.

Mattee Sue laughed good-naturedly.

"Z'Etta, do hush your *perfectly dreadfully* supercilious remarks. Do you run down-stairs and watch for Max to *reciprocate* with while I labor with mauma's sense of propriety, w'ich is *simply terrifyin'* in its rigidity. I *know it will take skill to do it*, but if I write *just* the proper sort of reply, I *know* you will let me send it, *won't you*, dearee?" she cooed, mischievously, as she opened her writing-desk in search of her finest note-paper.

"I *wish* I had some better stationery," when, finally,

she found the box. "This looks painfully common in view of his smashin' stuff."

"Don't you want my paper with my initials on it?" teased Etta.

"Just the thing! It ought to take both of us to answer that man. Don't you notice w'at he says about the witty annotations on the margin? You know it took both our brains to concoct most of them, and, as I intend to compose the reply, I might let you provide the paper but for the fact that he might suspect it is poverty that leads to the use of community stationery. I always did say you and I, together, would make a very good *one*. Hurry! I see Max comin' round the corner, now."

"I wish something romantic would happen to me," thought Etta, the youth within her yearning for some unusual experience. "It is a shame I am engaged. Now, I suppose, romance must be banished forever."

Pensively, she descended the stairs to greet her fiancé, and, half an hour later, Mattee Sue, flying down to the piazza to read to her sister the results of her cogitations, found the two enjoying fresh teacakes and lemonade.

"You don't mean mama has permitted you to answer that man!" cried Etta, horrified.

"Just this once," tantalized Mattee Sue. "Then the lid is to be shut tight on the boilin' pot of friendly intercourse, and unless it mysteriously slips off the correspondence will bubble into vapor and disappear."

"What did you say! Come, tell a fellow!" urged Max.

"I told him I belonged to one of the *first* families of Georgia, an' referred him to 'All the People's Magazine,' for pictures of us an' our houses, in case he never had been South and wanted accurate information. I even told him the date of the periodical that published

that travesty on truth, Z'Etta, with pictures of hen-coops and scrawny dogs and heaps of the great unwashed tobacco chewers of the mountains, with the titles, *First Families of Georgia*, under those mockeries of feudal domain,—shanty and cur,—and I say it's calumny,—depicted,—by the writers of things as they see them for the magazine of things as they are—or are not—accordin' to w'at one knows of his subject. You needn't groan,—there's more to follow. I told him we used to be rich befo' the wa'; but now we were livin' on the four corners of our plantation—Yankees always think we have plantations and nothin' else an' don't know w'ether they are farms or gold mines—an' that pretty soon we shall be eatin' the middle."

Etta shuddered, while Max laughed, and Mattee Sue caught her breath preliminary to another volley.

"Yes, and then,—oh Major Verness, how *very* glad I am to see you," she interrupted herself to greet a man of military bearing, who just then rode up on horseback and, alighting, moved about the group, shaking hands all round.

"Oh, Major, let me take your photograph! You look just as you did that long-to-be-remembered day last year, w'en you brought Mrs. Lavelle the first Cherokee roses she had ever seen. I know she is just *dyin'* to see you, Major, an' I feel that it is *absolutely imperative* for her to have a picture. Look your handsomest. Photographin' is the psychological portrait painter of the future an' I'll represent your state of mind accurately, if *only* you will give me a state of mind to photograph."

A little flush which delighted the irrepressible girl rose to the Major's face. Busily, she arranged the large camera, deftly drawing it from its position against the wall, every movement piquant, direct, and exquisitely fascinating.

"Ready, Major! Don't brush back your hair! It looks *so* romantic, that way! Your adoration is to be captured an' is goin' to the sweetest widow in Massachusetts, sure as fate!"

"You are a wicked little tease, Miss Mattee Sue," the Major looked with mock reproach upon the winsome little figure flitting to and fro, reminding him, for all the world, of a sunbeam, appearing and disappearing upon a heavenly morning.

"She is worse than that, Major," said Max, "she is a wicked little flirt, as well."

"Major Verness, *do, please*, take up for me! Not that I am averse to flirtin'—not a bit—" again the sunshine of her attention caressed him, causing a sense of light and harmony and virility to supplant any sense he might have felt of the heaviness of life.

"I like to *flirt*," she was singing on, in rhythmic flow, "Z'Etta likes to reciprocate—George Eliot's definition of w'at seems to me to be perilously near the same thing. However, if it makes Z'Etta feel any better to call the rose, oleander, it's all the same to me. She looks *fearfully* depressed if I accuse her of flirtin'; but if I acknowledge that her droopin' eyes betoken only the passage of a reciprocity bill she chirks up at once. Really, Major, though I would not for the world have you think I object to flirtin' I *truly* don't think I deserve the reputation, an' I never wish to take w'at doesn't belong to me, especially reputation, for I didn't know that man was goin' to buy my second-hand book,—"

"What is all this about? I haven't the least idea," and, as the click of the camera gave the Major release, he went to Mattee Sue's side and watched her slip the plate from the instrument and place it in safety, pending development.

Vivaciously, and ably seconded by Etta, Mattee Sue told the story of the travelling rhetoric.

"I decided, at once, that he is a *most proper person* for me to know; but I am sorry, Major," with a delicious melancholy, "I seem to have a *very* suspicious family. It *grieves* me to find my own dear mauma so prone to judge upon insufficient evidence. I demand further evidence before I pass judgment upon a fellow creature. I will not *permit* myself to think so harshly of a human being who seems so innocent and harmless. It *hurts* me to see that bein' *engaged* so warps one's sympathies. Z'Etta is so different from me. My sympathies are broad. I hold out my arms—"

"Indeed we are different!" Etta's embroidery grew beneath her skilful fingers. "When our fairy godmother went through the storehouse of our hereditary traits to find suitable gifts for Mattee Sue and me, she found grandpa's and great-uncle William's temperaments well expressed through a verse they had collaborated in childhood. The differences displayed so interested the fairy, that she decided on Great-uncle's part of the quatrain as key-note for Mattee Sue's disposition, and grandpa's part as key-note for mine. Hence, the diversity of our characteristics."

"What is the verse?" The Major settled himself in a chaise longue, prepared for amusement.

"Grandpa's two lines are—" Etta repeated slowly and with long-drawn rhythmic swing,

"The sun's mellifluous rays
Illumine the depths of the sea!"

"The fishes beginning to sweat,
Cry, 'Hang it, how hot it will be!'"

is great-uncle William's," caught up Mattee Sue's

cheery voice, with crisp rapidity and the staccato chipper of a bird,—“And that is *me*, all over! Major, have you heard from Mrs. Lavelle, recently?”

The Major positively jumped at this sudden thrust, and flushed as he saw how easily he had fallen into the toils of the little madcap, who laughed saucily.

“I have half a mind to hold your hand until you tell me you’re sorry you’ve pulled the heart-strings of a poor old bachelor so cruelly, little lady,” and he settled back into his comfortable position.

“Then it would be a long time before I said it,” Mattee Sue twinkled in the joy of repartee.

“There, there, Miss Mattee Sue, quit your *reciprocating*, and show me how to manage this thing!” and Max moved the camera into position for photographing his divine Etta.

“It is easy enough! I snapped you and Etta the other mornin’ w’en you were standin’ over there bid-din’ each other good-bye as if you never expected to see each other again. You didn’t notice me; but w’en people don’t notice me, it’s no sign I don’t notice them. Here’s the proof!”

The indefatigable little mischief drew a photograph from a box on a table near-by, displaying it with wicked glee. “See how perfectly silly you look. You were talkin’ about developin’ a picture or more love—one—”

“Daughter, it is quite time for you to eliminate some of your provincialisms,” interpolated Mrs. Romaine with exquisite intonation. “Do pronounce your g’s once in a while. You sound altogether too much like Maum Henny.”

“Yes, ma’am, I will try, ma’am.”

“Ma’am!” mocked Etta, good-naturedly. “Mama, she will have to drop that delicious reminiscence of past training, pretty soon, won’t she! I wish she

wouldn't call me sister, any more, either. All those phrases are so old-fashioned—"

"And beautiful," interpolated the Major.

"But to be relegated—"

"To the times w'en you would ride a palfrey in the dewy morn, eh, Z'Etta?" Mattee Sue drooped her eyes to open them again with a comic look of despair.

"But truly, mauma, there are *so many* things to *do* and *say* I don't see how you-all take the time to finish off every word as you do!" Then, with the flash of the bird on the wing—"I *do* hope Tom Landell will like my letter. Oh, Max, I forgot to tell you, Z'Etta said it was a shame she was engaged."

"Etta, is that true?" said Max, quickly, in an intense undertone. "You do not deny it!" and, leaving the group, they walked hastily to the further end of the piazza, in excited colloquy.

The rest of the party chatted on until the arrival of the postman. Mattee Sue ran to the top of the steps to receive the mail. Sorting it deftly and quickly, she passed from one to another of the group.

"Here are three for Z'Etta." She gave a quick glance in the direction of the two, still talking earnestly, "I won't give them to her, now, I reckon I set Max ravin' (*raving!*)"—looking bewitchingly at her mother while giving a vengeful little twitch to the final g—"by my last remark. W'en I throw a bomb, I don't follow to investigate results—or, at least, not for ten minutes! Here is a letter for you, mauma, two for granma, an' here," and she flashed a triumphant smile at Major Verness, "is a letter from Mrs. Lavelle."

CHAPTER XV.

A Jewish prophet writes—

*“He hath made the earth by His Power,
He hath established the world by His Wisdom;
And hath stretched out the heavens by His Under-
standing.”*

“I try and I try; but I simply can’t! It means a dark room and a bed for days!”

On her way to a church meeting, Agnes paused, her hand on the door knob, and, with a great wave of incapacity surging over her, attempted to will herself into activity.

“Am I halted by lack of will, or are my emotions pushing the instrument beyond its limits? In either case I have not thought through, sufficiently, to correlate mind and heart, so I will elect not to go.”

She returned to the library, where, a little later, Tom found her.

“Another cyclone brewing, Agnesia?” With concern, he saw her hopeless look. “It is some time since you had one. What is it?”

“I see looming before me a lot of church work I have no strength for.”

“Who makes up your mind for you, yourself or the public?” said Tom, a trifle dictatorially.

“If I carry out yours and Dr. Wehr’s advice of dropping the execution of my plans because of preconceived ideas, I shall soon be the ‘automatic instrument of desire’ and an inconsequential goose. What is his theory, anyway, in advising a grown woman to run about like a headless chicken!”

"You know as well as I," laughed Tom. "If I felt competent to teach one who, in herself, possesses so much wisdom, I should say it was to prove to said woman the value of a head."

"Talk to me, Tom." Wearily she laid her cheek against her brother's shoulder.

"I puzzle by myself, until, sometimes, I feel as if I should accomplish more were I headless. Why must I puzzle so, over what others take on simple faith? What does it mean to say, God use me? Surely, not that I am to deny my intelligence and do more than I can! I see so much mischief wreaked by willing, with repression and without judgment, that I wish that, for awhile, I could lose sight of the word will. Spirit should counsel my soul to tell my mind what to do, and reason would not let more be piled upon my body than it is equal to!"

"There are your directions, right there! Don't control anything, yourself or any one or anything. It induces repression or abnormal expression. Coöperate and coördinate. Tell me, has control ever cured a headache?"

"Never. It always makes me worse. Then comes self-condemnation because I have failed—"

"At something it is probably fortunate you have failed at. In my work, it is a delight to watch the effects of substituting, among abnormal or defective children, coöperation and coördination for will. The latter frightens and discourages. We are all sufficiently children to find value in applying this child-training to ourselves."

"Tell me about it!" Agnes settled into a less tense position, her eyes alert with interest.

"The *you must* and *you shall* inhibits or over-stimulates instead of equalizing activities, and they are constantly furling their standards before, *I need not unless*

I want to, but I want to, you bet! We had a lot of kiddoos who took no care of their teeth," he continued, himself learning lessons, as he saw that his sister, who had quivered under the whiplash of his criticism, rebounded when constructive principles were presented which she could apply to her own need.

"We had tried, *you must*, and *you shall*, and *you'll be sick if you do* and it amounted to,—just that!"—he snapped his fingers. "Finally, one of the fellows thought of putting on the table of the assembly room a skull with very dirty teeth and another with clean fine ones. The kiddoos shied about them for awhile. At last, one of them jerked his thumb in the direction of the first skull and asked if his teeth looked like that. I replied they did, and worse. He asked what he could do about it. Toothbrushes followed this query. Mastication, the dentist and public opinion did the rest."

"So, once in a while, you do advocate the study of opposites, not for dissection but for comparison?" Agnes smiled. "Is this method as satisfactory in dealing with those who lack wills, as with the wilful?"

"Equally."

"How about those without determination or desire to affiliate mentally the pictures you place before them?"

"Better than the old method, by far."

"I have followed this idea in my thought when I have said, 'It is my soul that avails.' I imagine that I am proving my meaning, until suddenly, I find the contrary. We are wiser than we express—"

"Or than we realize. You are developing your negative splendidly."

"I am growing more selfish every day."

"More wisely helpful, you mean."

"See how I am treating Cousin Matilda! I pay

no attention to her incursions into the privacy of my mind."

"With what result!" Tom's eyes twinkled.

"She is becoming a perfect angel. She never sends for me now on wild-goose chases. She was very sarcastic, at first, when, in a way, she felt that her arrows were not reaching their mark."

"In short, she respects you. To her, that means everything."

"I am studying myself, and believe my struggles are for the maintenance, not the giving up of my will. I have the sense of conquering in the large matters of life. It is in these insidiously small details, when the watchfulness is asleep, that I find myself—"

"Yes, and when your kindness is appealed to. I recall that when my mother sent me off to school the last thing she said to me was, 'Many men and women have parted with their integrity through the desire to be kind.' You make up your mind, then have the agonies over it."

"Don't you?"

"Not I! I make up my mind, then put the matter out of my mind."

"I believe some are born the other way round."

"How do you mean?"

"Some grow to an ideal by way of ideas; some have an ideal and express it through ideas."

"One analyzes, one synthesizes, and one synchronizes, eh? Yes, you are right."

"Some grow a plot as they transcribe ideas; some build a plot before they touch pen to paper. Tom, there is something else that worries me."

"This habit of worry is due to your physical condition. Our medicines—"

"Yes, dearie, I know, and I believe in them thoroughly under certain conditions, and I am sure that

the stronger and better balanced the instrument of expression, the better equipped it is to discriminate; but how can your medicines act on a bona fide message from outside—I want to know, to perceive unto realization, without the pyrotechnic display of apparitions or spectacular premonitions. I can but feel that physical depletion is not the cause of my extension of vision, nor do I wish to inhibit it for it enables me to be prepared for what otherwise would come as a shock, find me unprepared, and overwhelm me.”

“Does it ever avert the undesirable?”

“It would if I knew how to train it, I am sure.”

“Tell me. Perhaps I can help you.”

“I don’t mean to be always bringing up myself ‘to point a moral and adorn a tale’”—she stopped suddenly, then began again—

“When I was a child, I distinctly saw myself (my real self) in the air above this embodiment, which was being dissected. I was conscious and enjoyed the proceeding thoroughly. So it is in life. I do not mean to be self-centred,—”

“No, you *live*, dear, that is it, *live*. You do not go to the show of life and sit in the parquet, you are one of the performers. You are unique. No other is just like you, therefore, when you take a subject for dissection you take yourself as one having the qualities of the others and more, too. For this reason, you stand out, and to some would seem to *step* out from the rest.”

“I do not intend to intrude myself or my opinions—”

“No, it is your close analysis of any subject—yourself included—and your desire carefully to express, by word or action, that would by some be taken as insistence in your own opinion or the putting of your own personality before the limelight.”

"I do not think I am self-centred, Tom."

"Not sufficiently so. If you were more sure of yourself, and better pleased with your results, you would have serener atmosphere and steadier poise."

"The gods look down, incurious of themselves."

"It is a deep depreciation of your powers; an intolerant scorn of your output—a kind of *divine* discontent—that turns your thought back upon your work, and, to a superficial observer, sometimes gives the impression of self-sufficiency. In other words, you are always looking upon yourself as a spoiled copy of some rare edition. Now, having analyzed you as a subject,—as my very dear sister, what can I do for you? Tell me what troubles you. I will do my best to decide whether it is 'symptoms' amenable to remedies, or extension of the sense perception, as you deem it."

"One must be the outcome of a very negative and the other of a very positive state, shouldn't you think so? I am both, some of the time, and neither all of the time," she sighed, "I don't know what to do."

"What is it, Agnes? You are so tantalizing to keep from me what may prove a delicious pathological tid-bit."

"Don't say that! One great joy in my talks with you is that you never give me the feeling that you are a Heidelberg student rushing to the morgue for a cadaver, to use a phrase of Mr. Mevin's."

"And I never intend to be other than the kindly helper to any one, especially to you. Tell me!"

"I am receiving a great many letters from Aunt Luella. Their reception is preceded by an attack of nausea. I was awakened last night that way, and this morning there came a letter."

"It was something you ate—"

"I was afraid you would say that!"

"Then it was nerves. You love her very dearly and at the same time there has been much in your intercourse with her that has tugged at your heart and nerves."

"Withal, there has been true spiritual communion."

"Emotional!" muttered Tom.

"I will find out what it means. There are hands reaching out to me, too,—through the walls—I don't see them; but I know they are there."

She started.

"Another of those terrors. Tom, look at the clock. I will ferret this out! What time is it?"

"Exactly one," Tom replaced his watch with a troubled look.

"We will stop calling these *happenings*, and making me feel as if I were a lunatic or a liar. Watch with me, to see if any demand materializes. *Materializing!* That word and its horror is far from being confined to seeing astral shapes or to the concentration of ether, for the moment, embodying souls of those who have passed from our sight through what is called death. To go back to the church matter. After my attitude of Wednesday night, Mr. Herman has every reason to look for my active coöperation. I never should have gotten myself into a position to work with a man who abhors and detests me."

"If you believe he does that, why not steer clear of him?"

"I don't want the reputation of starter—"

"Then you will gain the reputation of quitter. If you cannot coöperate, there is bound to be a cataclysm, whatever *seems* to be the source. See here—" with a sudden turn to the conversation—"my rhetoric queen's mother won't allow her to write to me any more. She says she can't permit her daughter to correspond with strange men."

"I never supposed she would."

"I did, and I am not going to capitulate to any such foolishness. I'll make myself known to her somehow."

A far-away look came into Agnes' eyes.

"Will you take a book to Mrs. Lavelle, this afternoon? She leaves to-morrow and it is so disagreeable to have packages piling in after one's trunks are closed. I could send Judd—but—"

"No apologies. I go with pleasure, and, on my way, shall meditate on the terms of our discipline, 'First the ideal; then the possible; then the actual.' He who does not act what he thinks, thinks incompletely and he who takes the heart of his endeavor from what he is doing by sending his mind junketting, or by driving it to excess, soon has nothing to express," he said to himself, and, taking the volume Agnes handed him, he swung up the street with a sense of smug assurance that he had the key to Agnes' situation.

He found Mrs. Lavelle on the piazza, wrapped in rugs, and basking in the sunshine while looking over a budget of mail. She greeted Tom by handing him a picture.

"Do you want to see these photographs?"

Tom's heart gave a queer little thump as a pair of winsome eyes looked piquantly up into his from the bit of cardboard, and seemed to read his soul.

"What an alluring face!" he exclaimed.

"That is one of the most bewitching bird-like Southern girls I—"

"I wish it were Mattee Sue Romaine. It should be if it is not!"

"It is. What do you know about her? Have you met her?"

"In my dreams, and I am glad she looks as I should like to have her," laughed Tom, sincerity tingeing his

jesting tones. "Don't you recall the rhetoric incident of the early summer?"

"Yes, now you speak of it; but I had not connected it with this dryad of a Southern city,—dryads don't live in cities, do they! Well, she is a dryad, anyway, wherever she may take up her abode. You gave me no details that afternoon in the garden. You said you were going to, but you were too anxious to run away by yourself to write to her, I fancy. So it really has amounted to something, has it! Tell me. Did you write—and did she reply?"

"I can answer yes to both." Tom drew his chair a trifle closer. "I need a friend at court, and, as I came up here, I was wondering whom it could possibly be. Now I know. It may be you, if you are willing. Won't you let her mother know that I am a fine fellow?"

"Nothing will please me better," with an amused smile.

"I do not mean that quite as caddishly as it sounds," Tom colored furiously, despite his maturity. "I am very much interested in this correspondence, and, er—well, of course, her mother considers it unconventional, and,—there are signs of a lock-out, for me."

"I see." Mrs. Lavelle was all sympathy, "I will give you such a—"

"Heigh-o," and Grace Jenkins, espying the two, came towards them greatly to Tom's disgust.

"I had an idea you had left us," he responded to her greeting.

"We are going to-morrow. Later, we start for the South. You needn't hurry off so fast. I won't do you a bit of harm. Jack has the rheumatism and I am going to town on the next train to buy him some neckties."

"A new cure for rheumatism! Advertise it at

once," he laughed, and, realizing that the conversation would hold no more charms for him, he made his adieux.

"Rheumatism, pouf! Drunk is what she means! How she ever threw over Horace Vernon to marry that tank, no one can understand. See here, Tom Landell." He stood still in the middle of the road, as if halted to attention. "Agnes sent you to Mrs. Lavelle, the one visible link between you and that seraphic witch. What a wonder Agnes would be if she could only see a little more clearly. Did I not believe it detrimental to her health, I would encourage her more. Truly, what is eccentricity in one stage of experience is natural to another, and many states the average physician calls nerves is really the movement of the individual on a larger orbit of perception, expression, and, perhaps, realization."

CHAPTER XVI.

"That the human soul should never be without a secret desire for absolute perfection, bears witness to the divine light within us."

Dr. F. W. Foerster.

AFTER Tom had disappeared up the street toward Mrs. Lavelle's, Agnes turned from the window and went to the desk where lay her manuscript. "Tom is right," she pondered, "I keep those about me upset all the time because I can hear what the stars sing and cannot understand what human beings say. I know that Philip Herman abhors me—I can feel it through the air—yet, here I am, tied up with his work where I face him at every turn. Shall I retire and be considered a turncoat—shall I never learn to be helpful, however hard I try?"

The manuscript did not win her attention and she went, again, to the window.

"I shall make up my mind that, henceforth, I will do the thing before me with a brain that seeks simplicity. Is the intellect as great a deterrent as the devil of the old-time faith? 'The ways of the mentality are intricate; the ways of the spirit are simple.' Does mentality make us see through a glass, darkly, instead of face to face? Must I ignore appearances? No! But I must differentiate surface appearances, processes and principle. The first I must brush away, the second acknowledge, but not rest in, and, in the third I may abide. I see no other way, and if these experiences

that come to me are of value, perception and discrimination must teach me. I seek the peace that is above all—the peace that *passeth* understanding.”

The room was very still—with a stillness that was unusual. Into the daylight that was softened by flitting clouds there came a purity and luminence of atmosphere. As one on a hilltop sees a landscape spread out, Agnes felt her vision extending beyond her apartment. *Felt*, at first, for there was but a sense of entrance into a new country. All was dark—densely dark; but back of the darkness was motion. Out of the motion came a voice. She listened. It was that of Mr. Burke. Following the voice, came a shadowy shape.

There was no fear in her heart as she spoke to this figure emerging from the gloom, wondering, puzzling, searching.

“I don’t know where I am and I don’t know where to go,” came the voice, with the entreaty of a child. “Agnes, I have talked to you, as to no one else, about immortality and the future life. To no other pupil have I asserted my doubts or weighed my fears. By no one have I been so assured of life’s continuity and satisfactoriness, as by you. Help me now, for I don’t know where to go.”

Agnes’ heart went out to the searching soul with a great wave of helpfulness.

“I remember well, Mr. Burke, how you helped me in my search and how you so often assured me that I helped point the way. But why are you here in darkness? Are you not still in the land of the shadow which men call life?”

“No, I have passed out, all alone. Where am I?”

“You are to look on, Mr. Burke,” she said softly. “See, yonder is light. I will stand here until you reach it.”

The man faltered and turned beseechingly toward her.

"You are in a land of great beauty and of love. You will realize this very soon," Agnes encouraged. "Yonder are your friends; yonder is help; yonder is growth. Go on. *I will stand here until you reach the Light.*"

Slowly, the man moved away; he turned, now and anon, and waved her greeting, growing braver as he passed out of the dense darkness where her love had found him; more reliant, as he went on into the irradiation of the great Light that sends out help and life to them that walk therein. He turned and waved his hand, Agnes returned the greeting, saying still, with her soul, "Go on! *I will stand here until you reach the Light.*"

At length, with a glad, strong movement of assurance, he gave another salute, and she watched him enter into the broader, stronger radiance that illumined him and all the landscape.

Standing there, giving the spirit of her support, her soul demanding no explanation, seeking no solution, happy just in the giving of love and helpfulness, the scene was as clear to her as ever, when the maid announced Philip Herman.

The vision remained. She was about to excuse herself to the caller that she might dwell longer in its heavenly radiance; but the words sang through her heart,

"Had'st thou stayed, I must have fled,
That is what the vision said,"

and with one more glad God-speed to the soul she had helped upon its quest, she brought herself to the library with Philip Herman standing before her.

She greeted him cordially. His salutation, though courteous, was frigid. The halo of her experience lent tenderness to her address as she said,

"I am sure you miss the wonderful ozone of Mount Nodel, now you are in town, Mr. Herman. Are you suffocated after the freedom of the hillside?"

"Yes, Miss Landell, I am." His voice was almost bereft of human quality, so dead and tenseless was it.

Laved in the holiness of her experience, her soul was released from the strain of their relations and her manner, more than her actual words, made this evident.

"I do not know whether to call my visit here one of cowardice or courage," he continued. "I have come to tell you, that, with full appreciation of the attempts of you and your father and others, to relieve the situation, I have decided I would prefer to cut wood in your father's lumber camp—if he would entrust it to my incompetence—or to starve rather than present statements I believe to be false. I had hoped to steal futility down the pleasant by-paths of generalities in this church position, but yesterday, your chairman of Wednesday night's meeting called on me, acting as spokesman for many, asking if I intended to stand by the statements you made, and repudiating them as savoring of church and state. He said your remarks were worthy of a scribe of hell and pointed me down the swamp lanes of man-conceived superstitions and beliefs about the tortures exercised by God. The world is saying there are no more such demands upon us in these days of enlightenment. Let those who think so take unto themselves a pastorate."

"I know," said Agnes sadly. "Can you not find the relationship of seemingly unrelated things, and teach us the common truth to be found in differences? One of the old members of the church received a call

of comfort (?) from Mr. Kerrick, just before he left. She told him that she was lonely. 'Jesus is a very busy person,' he replied, 'He cannot stay with you always, He has to be with me some of the time.' Can't you, won't you explain away this misconception and comfort the seeker with the real relation of the Christ to the human heart?"

"To individuals, yes; but could I teach that in any church you know? They would call me a Buddhist, Pantheist, Theosophist—and I despise them all."

"You seek wisdom where it may be found. But, do you know, I doubt if it is ever revealed to us when we rage. I rage, too, sometimes," with a childlike attitude of confession.

"The creeds are cannibalistic—"

"Undeniably, that quality lies in the expression and interpretation of them, *not* in the essence of their meaning."

"Only last week a prominent preacher announced from his pulpit that one of the errors of the present day is the reading of modern interpretation into ancient words."

"You and I know there is no modern thought and there are no ancient words. It is consciousness. Had I the consciousness of Isaiah, I should read the universal meaning which stands yesterday, to-day and forever."

"Some of the church methods do not tend to train men in honor and integrity of daily living, and are such as no respectable business firm would tolerate. While *bidding* for the overflow of the Spirit, the town is placarded, 'Morality will not save! Reformation will not save! A man may reform and yet be lost!'"

"When I went to school, children were taught iron-clad rules by which to work their problems. Now, children are led to seek and discover for themselves

the working principle governing their studies and to express it individually."

"Mind action is so different in every soul there can be no ironclad rule of conduct."

"No, the lawyer seeks point by point, building a case as brick upon brick; the musician sees in the one page before her eyes the whole theme, to be expressed with its thousands of shades of effect, through the correct mental reception of the many signs that must be utilized automatically."

"I must approach the synthetic mind and the analytic mind with the same truth at the same time, by the same path—"

"Jesus grew and waxed strong, you know. Place your concept of His life and reason for being before the people and let Him grow before their minds. Don't try, of yourself, to grow Him. Teach them to watch His unfoldment from the man of a generation to the Christ of the ages. Therein, you can aid me very much; for though I pray and seek, I cannot understand. God; the divinity of man; the brotherhood of service—these are clear to me; but the horrible travesty of love expressed in pain and torture—that I can neither understand nor endure!"

She ceased speaking. Her mobile face shone with the birth of a new thought. The look of prophecy radiated from her, neglectful of his antagonism, in her devotion to the idea the man longed to express.

"Mr. Herman, I pray you will remain and speak to these people who are suffocating in the vaults of the temple, Truth, because no fit guide has appeared to lead them where they can see the daydawn."

As Mr. Herman descended the steps, two callers came up the driveway. They stopped to speak to the departing guest while Agnes, who had accompanied him to the door, awaited them. Again peace enfolded

her, as she stood with the soft air playing about her. Again her perception pierced the panorama of pleasant faces with the greensward for a background; again, on the wings of the couplet she had sung to herself—"Had'st thou stayed, I must have fled," great vistas opened and the form of her friend, silhouetted against the luminous white light, turned a radiant face toward her.

With his own voice, she recalled as so dear and helpful, teaching her the way, but now, wholly without mental and physical effort, he spoke to her.

"Courage is the secret, dear friend, who walked with me through the shadow and into the light. The courage and assurance of peace. *Be not afraid!*"

"Good morning, Agnes," said the taller of the two women, as, having left Mr. Herman, they approached the piazza. "My, but wasn't I glad of what you said at the prayer-meeting. It's made a big stir; but don't you mind it. It always takes stirring—"

"We could hardly wait to talk it over with you," said Mrs. Bryce.

"I don't believe there is another set of people, besides Christians, that would dare to go about in the half-dead-and-alive fashion we do, as a body, borne down with physical depression and ailments and forever talking about them as if they were special privileges and tokens of God's goodness, instead of our own stupidity. I'm sick of it; and as for the begging—"

"If this new man drags my husband away from his business and family the way the other one did,—I'll—"

"You don't see much more of him than I do of mine that's dead, do you," declared Mrs. Burton.

"No, I don't. It would do John lots more good to have some healthful pleasure with us all, than to be

mourning over some scheme of salvation he doesn't understand. It's so contrary to law and justice and mercy and all the other qualities we are supposed to have."

"We ought to have a religion we can put in practice."

"So I say; but John thinks that's scandalous! I tried to talk to him the other day about eugenics. He looked blue and said he'd been trying to be a good Christian for twenty years. I turned and looked at those youngsters of ours coming up like a pair of steps, and none of them with the vitality due them, and I said, 'John, have you ever spent one second in understanding and practicing what it means to conserve the power of the sons of God?' He just seemed discouraged and had not the least idea I was doing anything other than finding fault with him. Can't the church teach us any of these things. Oughtn't it!"

"I wish we could see our way clear," sighed Mrs. Burton. "What good does it do me to hurry through my work, when I'm scared to death half the time for fear I can't pay my bills, to go to church in hopes I'll find a little comfort, and perhaps a way out, and find the air so bad I get a sick headache and am told that I know I've sinned when I don't know any such thing, or that I haven't done all I could, when I know, if I have any fault to blame myself for, it is that I've done too much!"

"Yes," retorted Mrs. Bryce sympathizingly, "and with your butcher sitting right behind you watching what you put into the contribution box—"

"And grudging it as so much out of the bill I'm going to pay, on account. Then comes the plea to remember our obligations. If it's a poor plea, it's wearisome; if a good one, it's terrifying. What does the plea amount to!"

"Not our obligations to be honest and kindly and brave, but to accept the Lord Jesus Christ or be lost—whatever that may mean—nothing more than to make a personal gain of a mobbing that took place three thousand years ago. The little time I get, away from my cares, I want to hear or read something that will help me, or to get into the open."

"That's where Jesus taught, mostly, in the open. What good does it do me, Agnes, to hear that the sons of God took wives of the daughters of men, then to be told there was only one race and that relatives mustn't marry! What I want to know is how to get my boy an honest job with an honest man in an honest trade and make him an honest citizen."

"It's comforting, isn't it," said Mrs. Bryce cynically, "to work hard all the week and really get a feeling of glory in it and of closeness to the working life of God, and go to church to be told that work is a curse. The smart set isn't in it, Agnes, compared to the pulpit, for making one feel ashamed of work!"

"I read of a meeting the other day for finding out why people don't go to church. I could tell them! The teachings are not common sense. They tell us about a God who disobeys His own laws as a sign of superiority. If they try to be practical they tell us things about our every-day affairs that aren't so. We want to be revitalized and recharged with the principle of life that we may work it in and out of our own experiences."

"I must go, now," said Mrs. Bryce.

"So must I," echoed Mrs. Burton. "I've left Amy with the baby too long."

"Mr. Bryce will be in to dinner and nothing I hear from the pulpits, yet, has advised these cooks of ours to do their work decently and take an honest pride in worshipping God by service to man. I for one will

stand up, as good an expression of an individual as I am capable of being, to make this revered institution worth while. Agnes, more than a few of us are thanking you for waking us up, and don't you mind if there comes a row."

"Only the best can happen if we keep in mind that the seat beside every cradle is a pew in the church universal," returned Agnes, and, as the callers left, she stood, following them with her mind, reaching out to the vision of her soul.

"Is it le Bon who says, 'All that man calls nature, are visions merely; wonderful allegories, significant pictures of the laws of the mind; through this enchanted gallery man is led by unseen guides to read and learn the laws of Heaven'? I wonder why Mr. Burke was so alone and in darkness. How glad I am that I live larger than I seem, and that I could stand and wait until he reached the light. The vision came when I was in peace; it returned because I remained in peace and it gave me strength because it was a useful service. It will be explained to me soon, I feel sure."

"How do you do, Mrs. Bryce," called a clear voice, as the two women reached the highroad. "I must shake hands with you after all these years away. Is anything going on at the Landells? I have a special message for Agnes, but will wait if anything social is going on,—or is it that it is a Mecca for the brain and heart-hungry as it always has been?"

"Marian Fosby!" greeted the two simultaneously. "No, nothing special. We've been up there, partly to get help for ourselves and partly to prepare Agnes for what's going on as the result of what she said at prayer-meeting the other night. Did you hear about it?"

"No. I've just come home from a four years' so-

jour, first of travel, and later, of teaching. What is it?"

"The town is full of it. Some one heard her say to her father, after it was over, that she had stayed where she had to help, but that now she felt authorized to go on, whether the others did or not. If she believes what she stated, I wonder how she has stood with us as tolerantly and as sweetly as she has."

"Does she look as she used to?" There was a happy light in Marian's face. "I well remember her. She was my salvation, in those old days. I have come, now, to bring her tidings of the death of a dear friend and one-time teacher. It will make her sad to hear of his passing."

"Is it any one we know?" inquired Mrs. Burton.

"I think so, for the whole town loved him. It is Mr. Burke. He was especially identified with philosophy and Agnes was his ardent pupil. After a long illness, in a mental aberration he assisted himself to cross to the other side—to-day at one o'clock,—” and Marian passed on.

"My dear friend who taught me to love the sky," she said affectionately to Agnes, "I am so proud of you that you have waked this old town up, even if it is to disagree with you. Anything is better than inertia. You have been a blessing to every one all the days of your life."

"I wish I could think so," said Agnes, overwhelmed.

"And why do you give me that beautiful name?"

"It is one of your benedictions from schoolhood days. Another happy memory comes to me as I sit talking with you. Do you recall the day you helped John McBarr cut off one of my curls, when we were skating? I never knew who did it until the other day, when he put this ring on my finger and showed me the

trophy. The wedding is to be in the spring. I am so very happy, Agnes."

Just then, the clear-toned bells in the Roman Catholic Church steeple rang out, stroke, stroke, stroke,—pause; stroke, stroke, stroke,—pause; stroke, stroke, stroke,—pause.

Agnes' face became raptly intent.

"That is a beautiful message they ring into the hearts of men, morning, noon and night, when they herald, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost," said Marian thoughtfully, "if only the idea were not a travesty on common sense."

"It used to seem that to me! It does not now, and I learned the meaning through those very bells."

"Tell me, dear, it all seems so dark when I try to read the riddles of dogma," and Marian sighed.

"Let dogma alone and seek with the simplicity of the child. Those bells were a tribute of love, given to the church by the Hoyles in memory of their father. At a time when I felt just as you do, I fell to listening, listlessly, without assent or dissent to the sweetness of their tones. Always I found myself refreshed. Then there stole into my heart the recognition of the love that had impelled creative faculty to take crude substance and transmit its essence to the world in sound, to rest and admonish, to send its message through the unseen to live again in expression."

"You darling! How beautiful! The analogy is complete!"

"Yes, Marian, it is to me. God, the Father, expresses the creative principle; God, the Holy Spirit, expresses, in the love which gives propelling power to creation; God, the Son, the manifest expression, with the Trinity inherent therein, sounding, living through the ages. We cannot get away from Unity, Marian, because it is the foundation of the universe—"

“Nor from the Trinity, because it is the logical sequence of demonstration! How wonderful it all is!”

“And simple.”

After Marian had left her, Agnes went back to her manuscript. She took up one of the pages and scanned it closely.

“‘Evolution is the resultant of the development, through man, of God’s divine image,’” she quoted slowly to herself. “Perhaps, after all, I am expressing more of God than I have dreamed.”

CHAPTER XVII.

"See that through thee, the race progresses, not continues, only."

Ellen Key.

WEDNESDAY evening's service opened amidst suppressed excitement. The events of the preceding week had awakened the minds of all to divers issues. At Philip's request the building had been subjected to a thorough cleaning and ventilation. Every day he had spent hours, not in the study writing sermons, but in the body of the house trying to hold steadily in his heart the thought of peace on earth, good will to men. It was no vacuous reverie into which he entered. This was the first time in his life he had done other than cry out to a Lord "of corporeal content" as to a hierarch in a distant land, straining mind and body in supplication. His own growing consciousness; his mother; Agnes; all had set his steps forward. Still he felt like a drowsing child, who, stupid with slumber, takes his companion's hand and stumbles on, resenting the kindly insistence that refuses to allow him to rest in his stuporous condition on some snow-clad roadside or serpent-infested bosk.

As he stood this evening before the hardy world-worn faces, Agnes felt a great rush of pity overwhelm her. With her seeing eyes, she watched him standing, as one helpless, in a sea of electric sparks, while hovering just beyond the circle of this mentality shone the faint white light of his divinity, prevailing against this force of will expressing him. She held her breath, as he rose, and with the generally impassive faces

looking with unaiding critical eyes up to, rather than into his, he faced the bare square room with its glaring lights giving even deeper pallor to his face.

"Like Niobe, turning to stone," she thought, as the grayness of immobility settled over his hitherto mobile face.

"Friends," every nerve quivered at his anomalous position, as well as with the force of his message, "before I perform one rite as leader in your communion, I wish to talk with you. There are tremendous truths in the accepted Orthodox Christianity, but these are to be seen by minds awake to their spiritual meaning, and not to be accepted as one accepts a phantasy of recognized but distorted knowledge in a dream.

"The religion of the future is to rise above the animal, magical, emotional, and technical tendencies of the past, and be more intelligently and divinely human. It will depend less on symbol—more on spirit and on truth. No longer can morality be ignored as a landing-place in the climb towards the pure moral spirituality of the Christ. Love interweaves us with externalities but makes us less dependent upon them, for it teaches that the essence of all externals is within. It is the church's mission to bring into our lives moral purity and spiritual vision. The more active the principle of unity, the more knit our society and the more apparent the inherent unity of the universe. New conceptions of truth meet our growing needs. When the mind conceives new conditions and the heart accepts them, humanity cannot fail to advance in ever-improving states."

He turned toward the speaker's chair, then abruptly moved toward the rows of settees, where he took his seat.

At Agnes' request, Mr. Landell had gone to the

meeting, and, as he sat beside his daughter, he watched the effect of Herman's words. The countenances of some of the listeners were sullen with antagonism; of others, alert with appreciation. Fathers, mothers, men of affairs, sat with hope illumining their eyes. "These belong to the church whose altar is within, and whose bread of life is more than a church building or a creed," he quoted to himself. Then his eyes turned slowly until they rested on the head of the third settée from the front, in the middle aisle. Yes, there he was, Deacon Lambert, just where he had sat thirty years ago, on a Wednesday night, when his dictum had set the real Daniel Landell free by denying his communion in this church institution which had made its head a God of vengeance, whom, to call Father, was a crime.

The deacon's hair had grown white, his figure bent under the thirty years. Now, as of yore, pulling himself up with the assistance of the pew in front, he came slowly to his feet.

"I don't need *time* to consider the heresies you have uttered, Mr. Herman, nor the blasphemies for which you will be accountable to Almighty God; but I will state that the land on which this church is built was given us by my father, that we might hear *Christ crucified*, not torn asunder and scattered in humanity. We must preach condemnation for those set aside by God's gracious choice, like chaff for the burning, and reward to the elect. We want some one to teach us how to die and not be lured by fantastic lessons on the glories of living. If such blasphemy prevails, I shall place a case in the courts to withdraw the land from the church holdings."

The grayness of Philip's face became as granite. The mobility of his expression was quenched. Life seemed drawn therefrom, as, like a rock, he stood before them.

"I do not wish to create a schism. I will withdraw—"

"You have created it already by your words,—devil's spawn that they be! Brothers and sisters, look back to the time when, in travail of soul, you bowed before Almighty God, helpless and vile, with no grace in you, and plead for mercy, knowing that, if not of His elect, He would turn you into outer darkness, despite your pleas. If you have changed one jot or tittle from that despair and faith of those early years, as Jesus says, turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die!"

"Because it appears, we can't help ourselves!" said Mrs. Bryce, ever bold. "Deacon Lambert, I don't believe Christ ever said that. It was some dyspeptic old somebody. Maybe you've got it mixed with the devil's saying. People do, sometimes, you know. You gave us a long talk here one night on a text that sounded so different from what I could believe God would say, that I looked it up. You had the devil instead of the dear Lord!"

"It was the Bible, and every word of the Bible is to be followed."

"I do not come to breed dissension," came Philip's voice. The iron had entered his tones, by now, and they rang with a metallic clang.

"Your seed is sown!" Mr. McBarr rose from his seat—"the seed of sedition against your Maker. How dare you claim Him as your Father!"

"If God made us, Brother McBarr," said Mrs. Bryce, "it seems to me it gives him clear title to us, and if He made the world and all that is in it, I'd like to ask whom He adopted us from!"

"The devil!" Mr. McBarr's tones precluded further questions even from the brave Mrs. Bryce.

"I have grieved over many signs of dereliction," monotoned Mr. McBarr, "I have looked long for the

eruption of heresy to boil out its venom! The unheard-of proceedings of last Wednesday night warned us that the lava of hell was overflowing the fair city of our God. I have prayed all the week that I might be able to smite the cloven hoof before it imprinted its mark upon us as a church, however it might have stamped itself upon some of its members. *Christ has wiped the slate clean for me!* I leave you in the evil He has prepared for your undoing. I withdraw from this body till the gangrene has been cut away."

He took his hat and walked heavily from the room. Timidly, his wife followed him. His son moved a little closer to Marian Fosby, who sat beside him, and settled himself more definitely into his seat.

"I restate that these things cannot be done in this church. It is dangerous to measure out any value to ourselves," said Deacon Lambert.

"Except as it proves our oneness with the Father," interrupted Philip.

"Moral power is a snare—a theft from God in whom all power lies—a blasphemy!" continued Deacon Lambert. "This house is for worship, not for teaching. We want Christians, not citizens! Morality! It is the damnation of the seeker after heaven! Unless, at once, this infernalism is stamped out, I lay claim to this land, to-morrow!"

"I do more than that." Mr. Frisby, old and quivering, struggled to his feet. "Henceforth, this place will be a cesspool of sedition. When my father took those titles, he received them, not as a church official, but as an individual, as the deeds will show, and whereas Deacon Lambert makes proviso, I make none, but claim the land, to-night, as my father's heir."

Consternation flashed into the faces of the mature members of the congregation. The eyes of the young

were alert for battle. Then Mr. Landell rose, and the surrounding spaces grew clear and sweet.

"You all know me," he said simply with tenderness in his mellow voice. "Some of you may wonder why I am here and why I speak to you at this crucial moment! It is because I love you! Some of you will recall when I stood before your tribunal thirty years ago and was excommunicated by you because I loved my Father instead of fearing God. It has made me love you the more, for through your strict adherence to what you believed to be your duty, you freed a soul. As with Adam and Cain, your outer darkness proved to be my land of enlightenment. Your action liberated me from boundaries to which, until now, I might have limited myself had you been more lenient in what you considered your God-given privilege. I had considered that worship of God and of the church institution were one and the same. Denied the church, I found God in me. I began to learn, like Philips Brooks, that 'it is not the most active people that we meet, not the busiest, that rush about, meteor-like, after visible chance to work. It is lives like the stars, which simply pour down on us the calm light of their bright being, to which we look up, and out of which we gather the deepest calm and courage.' I learned another truth presented to the disciple,—that *not to do* has its place as well as doing.

"In after years, I erected a building I offered to share with any who wished to join with me in worship, without restraint of creed. No one came. As time went on, I found a religious body in a near-by city, with whom I affiliated; but always I have held that little temple sacred. There I have had my visions; **there** my faith kept strong. Before entering, I cleansed my heart of rancor; if I could not I would not go in. Many have wondered. It has been in response

to a dictate that sometime it would prove a haven for souls in need. Has the time come? Not in rancor, but in obedience to law? For it is law, you know, that when a unit has grown to an inherent realization of growth, or expansion, it divides. So it presents a dual aspect and out of that dual aspect of one, there comes a third—an objectified expression—

“The Trinity,” whispered Marian joyously to Agnes, who sat near her—

“It is not a divorcement or quarrel, but an expansion of our idea of unity that shows still other aspects of our work within these walls. I offer to you this building, that, in coöperation with this dear old communion, new aspirations may induce new activities.”

There was stillness of tremendous import. Slowly the tension of antagonism relaxed. Then there was a little rustle like the stirring of leaves. The rustle became a pronounced movement, and a deep wave of relief lifted the congregation on the shoulders of action.

“Mr. Landell,” said Philip, a tremor of life quivering through the stone of his exterior, and warming it into human tenderness, “couldn’t we walk up there, now, with you, and see how we can combine an extension of work with these interests here?”

“I shall be glad to take you there,” responded Mr. Landell, “though, possibly, not to enter until the Gennesaret of our troubled minds has been quieted by the Christ of the Spirit.”

“It is to be hoped that the members who feel they have liens on this property will decide to retain its activities in the worship of God by service to man,” said Philip, and the humanity retired, as he spoke, behind the stone of his expression. “Being is the most propelling power there is,—the only sort lasting and worthy of the name. The man who *is*, is a centre of

power. It does not become personal will to enforce its own demands and decisions; its very stillness is the power that gives conduit to divine Energy. Let us go, together, to see what can be done, to advance here and there the expression of that power."

He moved from his seat. Agnes and her father followed him. Mrs. Herman joined them. There was a moment of hesitation and Mrs. Burton and Mrs. Bryce were added to the little company. Marian Fosby and John McBarr, side by side, moved with them. One after another they arose—men and women whose experiences had made them live. They passed out—and a great stillness fell upon the place.

Then rose the sound of weeping. The men who had precipitated the movement sat looking at each other furtively, their faces filled with mingled shame and greed. Noble-hearted men, strong and godly in their faith, according to their lights, sat stunned as with horror at a great calamity; women, with pure and tender hearts, sat with heads bowed, expressive of the sorrow and resignation that constant contemplation of a suffering Jesus, whether before an image of the mind or of marble, gives the sincere believer who has not learned to contemplate sorrow apart from the personal, or to see in it a pathway to the stars. Their acceptance of tradition and of doctrines, about which they had declared and exhorted, but never truly thought, made them fear change as a form of blasphemy of that they revered, and held them pinioned in their seats.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“ * * * *a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee!
See the Christ stand!* ”

Robert Browning.

SILENTLY the little group wended its way through the brilliant night. The hoar frost glistened in the air and everything was very still. At the end of a long and gentle incline, lights twinkled from a small but perfectly proportioned temple on the summit. Philip thought of the Acropolis, the crown of Athens, and the temples of wisdom, set, as was this temple, overlooking a city of deeds. He felt as if he were one of the ancient Greeks, making procession for worship, then he looked about him at the stern and sturdy New England faces and the vision vanished. He wondered what were the emotions predominant in the hearts and minds of these pilgrims of centuries later, on the same pilgrimage for truth. As for himself, he knew well that he was in a turmoil.

“ I, to enter there, with heart free from rancor and hate! Better have remained where I was,” he thought in the gloom of his tempestuous mind. “ There, at least, under cover of hurling the denunciations of Jehovah, I could have voiced my own heart’s bitterness. I could act as mouthpiece of this God they understand and expect me to interpret after the fashion of their own methods of thinking and not belie my own self. I will not enter! I will not purge my heart of anger toward those who pauperized me or those who saved my life.”

At the doorway of the building, Mr. Landell paused and faced the group.

"Let us not go in. We will meet after we have found ourselves within ourselves. Amen."

The little company dispersed. Morosely, Philip accompanied his mother to the parsonage, and left her without a word. Plunging down the road, he walked for hours beneath the stars.

"What business has that woman to meddle with my life?" he raged aloud. "What right to summon me from that bourne on which I was entering, when dragged back to life and its trumped-up responsibilities!"

"Is there no free will at any point of one's career," he cried, "that one comes to earth at beck and call; is sent forth or held here, to endure the agonies of hell on earth, at beck and call?"

He remembered the tale of Lazarus after his resurrection,—a thing for loathing to all who had not been dead but were yet alive. He felt as that man must have felt—with swollen body, and empty eyeballs unveiled to view. He wanted to die, and could have, but for Agnes Landell with eyes that one moment were like forget-me-nots and the next ablaze with intuition. Why had she not let him alone! He writhed as he imagined a grasp upon his arm.

"I resent your interference," he shouted into the forest as he walked. "If God wills to move me about as a puppet; so be it; but a woman shall not! I thank no one who has had a part in my amusing comedy of errors."

For hours he tramped across country, but the storm of his heart did not abate. His demand for new conditions; their sudden acquisition; the humiliating recognition that he was not clean enough in heart to receive them when presented; the realization that, after

al, he did not wish to change his heart; that he desired to hate and trample under foot those who had helped as well as those who had injured; determined to be at war with the world;—this revelation overwhelmed him. The doctrine of love! It was too tame! From the files of memory he brought forth denunciations of the Hebrew prophets. They came fast, and he shouted them into the silent night. In the early dawn, he returned. There was a light in the study and his mother was moving about.

“I hope you have not been sitting up for me. I am no longer a child, you know,” he said, as insolently as his inherent fineness of nature permitted.

“I have been collecting our possessions for a possible removal, to-morrow, to the lodge,” his mother replied, with a calmness that held him shamed but not repentant, in his childish mood. “You realize, I suppose, that after the experiences of last evening it may be expected of us,” and tranquilly she went on, gathering the few articles they had brought from Mount Nodel.

Philip went up-stairs. He did not go to breakfast; but in the late forenoon, left the house without a word.

Mrs. Herman saw him take the turn towards the Landells. Her mother heart went out to him. It was wonderful how this woman bore herself. Her attitude was not one of resignation nor of passivity. It was of supreme trust and calm.

As she moved from the window, she said, just above her breath,

“‘How wondrous is God’s power,—who but knows it?—

And yet, a single human heart can perfectly enclose it.’”

Philip met Agnes and her father starting for a walk. They asked him to join them, and the three turned

toward the park. At his best, Philip was not much of a pedestrian, and this morning found his respiration more disturbed by his internal dissensions than he could have believed possible. He stumbled, and lost step constantly. After one or two attempts to pour out his heart—resulting, each time, in the discovery that his powers of expression were beyond control—he became silent. As, slowly, he recovered his breath his poise returned. He began to respond to the exhilarating air, and there stole into his senses the knowledge that the fragrant hemlocks, the beeches and the pines were voicing, in their own language, their unity with life.

The morning had grown to midday. Through the resilient air, there pealed the noontide bells, with their message.

Agnes and her father stood silent in the grove, heads uplifted, with an intentness of aspiration that radiated from them. Then, as the joyous clangor mounted upon the wings of its triune declaration, the two swung into the rhythm of their step again, and, in a silence teeming with intelligent recognition of life, a three-mile walk was accomplished.

"Come in," said Mr. Landell, hospitably, as they approached the house.

Despite the passion in his heart, Philip had felt the Presence. He looked earnestly at the speaker.

"I thank you, not now. I'll wait and think again before I tell you what I came to say."

The aroma of a New England autumn was in the air. A copper sheen lay on the waters. The oaks were incarnadined in the sunshine; and the scarlet and yellow of maple and of ash flashed royally in the light. The incense of balsam and of fir rode upon the winds. Trailing across the sky, a zigzag line of flying geese

made a thread of dazzling white, vanishing into the mackerel sky to the south.

About twelve, nearly all who had left the Wednesday evening service with Mr. Landell gathered at the entrance of the chapel on the hill. A few of them, alarmed at their temerity, had already deserted the new movement, and others, through conviction, had joined it. There was about the gathering an atmosphere of assured purpose, whose very intensity precluded neighborly interchange.

On the hour, Mr. Landell inserted a tiny key in the lock of the outer door.

"In old Salem, there is a little church, with a key of incongruous size, inserted upside down and turning, as it might seem to us, the wrong way. Like the theology of the early settlers, its laborious action opened the doors for men who sought truth. Soon we shall learn that there is no lock nor key on truth except the eternal processes of Spirit, which shut no one out; but open to each individual the many mansions of unfolding understanding. May we use this key I hold to include all, as faithfully as our forebears used theirs to include the few."

As he concluded these simple words, he opened the doors.

The company found themselves in a vestibule with domed ceiling. Three low broad marble steps, then a landing, and several more steps led to doors of bronze. As these swung back, each individual, feeling the purport of the room, went silently to the comfortable seats.

In the unusualness of the procedure no one noticed that Philip Herman had not entered with them. A moment of silence, and the company passed into a chapel beyond, to which Philip had found his way through a rear door. After reading from the Bible

with an interpretation so beautiful that each passage seemed a special message, hitherto unheard, he prayed,—

“Lord of Life,—We see of Thee only what we are. We choose to grow, daily, that finally we may see Thee as Thou art. Amen.”

Then he spoke.

“A great physician gives us the statement, proven true—that changing, conscious thoughts change the action of the lungs, the heart, the stomach, the liver, with lightning rapidity. ‘A warm, sympathetic thought, from friend or foe, at once begins to transform the watery acid humors of the blood to red globules rich, not only with albumen and iron, but with the sweetness and strength of a better character.’

“With this principle in mind, may everything we do this week be enfibred with it, and the next week shall find us more accurate manifestations of Spirit, because our acknowledgment of our oneness in God, unifies our purpose as neighbors and as lovers of men. Without speaking, will you follow me?”

He led them into the sunshine of the autumn day, and, pointing to the landscape,—

“Not only toward mankind shall this unity be extended; this week, we will lift our eyes unto the hills, whence cometh our help. In this noontide sky with its changing clouds, we shall hear God give His message of His eternal purpose through the varied phases of expression. In this mellow atmosphere, softening the blaring blue of the great dome, we hear His lesson that experience mellows the judgment of a confined perception that broadens with each added realization.”

He bowed his head in dismissal, and silently but happily they dispersed, while the glory of their Lord that had risen upon them accompanied them on their light-illuminated way.

Of all present, perhaps Philip himself was the only one who failed of receiving more than a temporary uplift. By a fierce mental effort, he had braced himself, for the time, to conceal his antagonistic emotions and had forced himself to state what he inherently thought truth. Such an attitude often bears the semblance of spiritual exaltation whereas it is only nerve afflatus. It may transmit power to others for the moment; but, evaporating, leave the speaker in the deep depression and poison of insincerity. Like a man coming out of a debauch, he faced the conditions which had brought him to his present state, and resentment seethed anew within him. Notwithstanding his detestation of the situation, he was impelled to seek help.

"Always the result, of pauperizing," he said scornfully of himself, "it takes away the man and leaves the thing!"

Again, he found himself on the way to the Landells, every click of his heel jarring his brain. He pictured himself expressing his opinions of Agnes in unvarnished terms. This excitement grew upon him as he entered the library.

"I am here, a weakling," he said bluntly, as he greeted his two hosts. "Of course, you saw I did not enter your chamber of forgiveness," he laughed scornfully, "I would not lie, and as I could not follow your suggestion that I leave rancor behind, I decided to remain outside with the companion of my waking and sleeping hours."

"Tell us about it, Herman," Mr. Landell drew chairs together companionably.

"I can forgive neither those who drove me to penury nor those who came to succor me. Even you, Miss Landell, are the object of my fierce resentment! Why didn't you let me die!"

Springing from his chair, he lunged from one end

of the long room to the other. Then he resumed his seat, struggling to repress his feelings, over which he had so slight control.

Agnes shivered violently and was silent.

"Do not force yourself to anything, by thought or deed, Herman," said Mr. Landell, noting the effect of Philip's words upon his daughter. "Let the pendulum swing."

"Do you believe that all those who entered that room left rancor behind?" Philip's chiselled face seemed to harden into marble.

"You said this morning, 'We see as much as we are.' I go further. We get, not what we wish, but what we are. You are far more than you realize."

"What is the use of the church anyway!" Philip forced back his denunciations against Agnes with a mighty effort. His impulse was to hurl them upon her as he had done alone in the forest. Instead, he voiced what were to him equally vital but personal issues in a larger sense. "What is the church anyway! A political machine with political methods, each sect tenacious of its special, man-made tenets, concessions made only as a seine whereby to catch more human fish! I am no more at rest in this new position than I was in the old. Even your idea of a church, superior in its quality of unity and incorporateness with daily expression as it may be, seems useless, if we are Christ-consciousness in various stages of unfoldment."

"You, yourself, have said that Jesus does not deal in externalities."

"I say many things with one part of my understanding that I utterly repudiate with another part of me—"

"So do I," said Agnes, earnestly. "My philosophy of life is very restful and satisfying to me; but it is like designing. The unit remains clear and convincing,

but I daub its expression fearfully on the cardboard of daily doing."

"What good are the puerile classes; the educational methods the church attempts to sustain! The colleges are at hand! The schoolmasters and editorial writers preach far more effectively and vitally than we can, hampered, as we are, with dogma and ecclesiasticism! There are all sorts of clubs, outside, far better equipped than we can equip them! There is not a leg left for the church to stand on."

"The only legs any of these things stand on is the truth that the within is ceaselessly becoming the without."

Philip threw up his head as if catching a breath of life-giving ozone.

"True. I had not perceived that. The fountains are being fed from the Source! Of course! It is a pity that such precious elixir is muddled from the outside."

"There is no inside or outside. Bear that in mind and the problem clears. The church is one of God's expressions in the world. Universal currents flow through it in worship to God through service to man. This is the way I look at it, see if you agree with me." Mr. Landell settled back in his chair. Instinctively, Philip followed his example. His sense of release was perceptible.

"As I understand it, the church is an institution, whose use is to discover, protect and conserve the highest revealed wisdom. It is not the whole wisdom of the supreme; it is an aggregate of the wisdom discovered and protected and conserved by every type of mind—a medium for the preservation and distribution of their partial comprehension. A medium must ever be subordinated to the power it transmits. It is not a completed revelation; it is made up of many diverse

views. Though in a sense a composite of opinion, in no sense can it be considered to hold a complete statement of principle, for even when well conceived in the soul the expression passes through minds by way of verbal instruction with the limits of physical expression and finite understanding. Its standards are constantly advanced, through accreted wisdom, granted, as always, more intimately to individuals than to masses, but preserved and conserved by the church. Even if these wisdoms of many minds are prone to inculcate half-understood truths, it is better so than that chaos reign. There are many institutions, Herman, for the expression of the idea through the individual, but it seems to me that, in its many phases and grades of understanding of ideas, the church is the only institution sacred to the protection of the ultimate ideal, through every phase of the growing consciousness."

"Look at Galileo! Science would have found—why, the world was on the verge of discovering everything when the church halted its activities!"

"For the protection of the ultimate ideal, I repeat, slow dissemination of truth is indispensable. Through the ages, it is recorded that too great or sudden an influx crazes, or confuses, or blinds. It must be found in peace to be held in peace. Every grade, every expression, erratic, erotic or mental, shows the percolatings of the stream of wisdom through millions of tiny rills. Larger revelation is received through some individuals than through the church, because the masses linger on the plain while single souls mount to drink from the stream near the Source. The church is not our salvation. We are its salvation, and, in preserving its integrity, we save to the world and to ourselves a concerted expression of the ultimate idea. Revere the church, Herman, support it. As an individual, bring the divinity of your love and understand-

ing to bear, to give the less discerning truer interpretation of its intent and use."

"If only I had proof—just one proof—that the painful mediocrity and partial interpretations of the church had, in one single instance, upheld the ideal, instead of crude ideas of human, physical fashioning, I would work on, blindly though it be! One proof!" The color receded from his face and left it deadly pale.

"I will give you one of many I could produce! When thrust out of the church I adored I believed myself shut away from the God I loved,—and was stunned. Perhaps I felt much as you do now. Business called me to a country town not far from here. The very intelligent clerk of the hotel drove through the section with me. The landscape was dotted with meeting-houses of typical New England architecture. During one of our drives, I was thinking scornfully of the uselessness of those beseeching steeples, pointing heavenward where no heaven is, when my companion waved his whip in the direction of a hamlet we were approaching. 'This is Beabrooke,' he said. 'A man's life was hardly safe here till that little meeting-house over there was built. Since then it has been a thrifty, law-abiding place.' As an answer to my soliloquy, this so impressed me that during a protracted stay I affiliated myself with the church, in order to discover what it took to construct the morals of such a community.

"The theology was lurid—hot, like their quarrels; uncontrollably emotional, like themselves; intensely personal; thoroughly material. Gold, a standard with them here, became, likewise, a standard in their heaven. Steady, sequential progress, with moral accountability, meant nothing to them. Winning a fight with fists or pistols was a sign of superiority here; hence, a series of good tough fights with a physical devil—that

meant something. Most of them knew nothing of a loving earthly father; but a taskmaster it were well to please—that, they understood. They knew what it meant to be hurt or hungry; hence, physical disaster, hells and blood-flowing were comprehensible. They had to work so hard and buffet need so constantly that a heaven of activities was little to their taste. The half-fed, drink-sodden flesh was poor instrument for accepting or actualizing the gospel of action. Theirs was a crude idea, compared with what life had unfolded to me, and its purpose so hidden that it was quite absent from their expression of belief; but it was there. I learned, that summer, *that the church idea meets the demands of every state of consciousness as each becomes cognizant of the idea*, and its application to all phases of daily life.”

“What do you make of a statement I heard last week from a noted reverend—that David’s adultery and murder count for nothing before the fact that he made the line straight to God. What line pray! The church people cry out against morals (as a sign of spiritual health) as against a pestilence. I join the ranks of those who find encouragement in belief of life beyond the grave and am halted by some church brother who begs me denounce the prevalent light attitude towards death.”

“That signifies the degree of their spiritual awakening. The church stands the test of utility as well as do institutions of learning and of law.”

“Many of these are effete enough,” agreed Philip.

“Truth is always revealed to persons before masses; persons are always in advance of institutions; but the conservatism of institutions saves the world from inundation by unproven beliefs, and nurtures and protects what finally it acknowledges and affirms. You

speak of the paucity of numbers. Jesus chose to teach but twelve, intimately. When these were ready to teach, he did not hold them static, as a body, but bade them go into all the world."

"That may be why the church, as a body, seems composed of so much protoplasm," said Philip, cynically. "They are there to be impressed, and when the impression is ready to be expressed, new forms of beauty—new forms of order—" the cynicism was lost from his tones as his vision grew—"the old from the new—the training school from the kindergarten—on, on, on!" The light grew in his face.

"We cannot be driven from the church by the crudities and limitations of its exponents for we are its exponents, expressing, in methods to suit the mind, and need, in sociological and moral uplift, vital principles, apprehended through the church idea, founded in stability, grown in resistance, and progressing in rhythmic flux and flow of divine consciousness."

"So you do not believe its province is to compete with 'merely' educational institutions?"

"Let it stand simple and central, as you yourself suggested this morning, pointing out the ideal, and training the consciousness to perceive its practical application in the daily life. Then you will find the contradictions of creeds and rites and beliefs standardized, as steps in unfolding wisdom."

"In our present civilization," said Agnes, "the church is the only place where father, mother, and children, side by side, learn lessons in active, unified devotion; the only place, where, side by side, they are presented to the primal principle, and taught to work it out in service to each other in home and neighborhood. Together they see

“‘Tongues in trees,
Books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones,
And good in everything.’”

“I had not thought of that! You say these little classes often bear whole families into the uplands of thought. How often is it true of the college, that only the one of the family who attends it is benefited. Indeed, frequently, the one is alienated from the family.”

“The church is neither exclusive nor seclusive, it is inclusive. As my father says, it is neither outside nor inside any institution or club or personal intercourse. When strangers go to church for companionship, and come away, charging indifference of the members towards them, they are not really seeking unity of *spirit*, but social interchange. Instead of realizing it to be a centre, sending out life, steadily, through many radii, they fix attention upon the radii, forgetting the centre whence comes the unifying power. They are looking for nothing more than what universities, courts of law and other phases of life can furnish them, therefore, they receive no more. I love the lines from the Cherubic Pilgrim,

‘We say, in earth, in heaven,
O God, be done Thy will,
And yet, God has no will,
But is forever still.’

“So should the church represent its idea—no personal will, antagonizing one radius with another, no state of consciousness rejecting a constantly enlarging view, but a centre, holding all together in spirit—but when people ask for a church home—”

"The church is not a physical home. The voice of God in the world does not consist of teas, clubs and hand-shakes. It expresses itself in clarity of vision, honesty of purpose, exchange of brotherly service, and the unfolding of attributes which humanity possesses in totality. I do not consider that the clubs are taking the place of the church, Mr. Herman. These are the radii of the church idea. Individuals must express the radii of a sphere for it 'takes a whole church to preach a whole gospel.' Rightfully, the expressions are to be found where mankind lives. First and last, the church is not a club house," she concluded emphatically.

"No, it is the central fountain where intelligent and ignorant, refined and crude, the illumined and the blind may drink, according to his present capacity," said Mr. Landell.

"It is not the part of any clergyman to measure that capacity, or to be praised or blamed for it," said Agnes.

"No," returned Mr. Landell. "With laity and clergy, it reverts to the individual. I have been through it all, Herman. Baptism seemed barbaric to me, after I was shocked out of the emotional belief I had held so long. The immaculate conception appeared immoral. I have rounded the circle of research, studying heart and circumference, from tradition, fact and symbol. With all these lights upon these ancient beliefs, my spiritual consciousness now confirms them all."

"We come out of tradition, through questioning, don't we, father!" said Agnes.

"We do. Then we question our doubts, testing them in sequence, by the altitude of our standards."

"How unreliable we find reason, then, since it deduces only what we have involved in our limited

rather than our universal growth," said Agnes, while Philip drank in their words, thirstily.

"When Holy Spirit vitalizes consciousness, we realize the absolute naturalness of the immaculate conception, as against the horrible travesty of birth in travail and shame. Baptism! Communion!" Mr. Landell's face became illumined, as he spoke. "Study the spirit of this, dear helper in a noble cause. Don't dig up the filth of seeming failures. Make yourself a dynamic centre of spiritual force. The church needs you, Herman. Preach—teach pure idealism—the principle that the within ceaselessly becomes the without, and the Source of Force—the Still God—still with eternal wisdom, vigilance, power and glory, shall pour His power into expression. Do not villify! We have had enough of that! Don't claim that the ministers wink at wicked deacons. Present principle. Let it pour out! If it flows with sufficient momentum, the wicked parishioners will receive it. It is not for you or me to take any individual, *as a fact*, and villify him. Reserve that strength to animate the teaching of principle. The church provides lessons for all phases of mind, individual or congregate, and each, if he choose, may find illumination for his stage of understanding in the church idea,—the coming of the Christ-consciousness to all the universe. My boy," Mr. Landell rose as Philip made a spasmodic motion of withdrawal, and laid his hand on the pastor's arm, in a manner which showed, more than anything he had done, his sense of brotherhood, "you see far more than you realize. Do not doubt yourself, nor your honesty, when, as the result of one phase of unfoldment, you express thoughts such as you have spoken from the pulpit, and follow these with vituperations of wholly different character. These phases are stages of growth. Keep

at work on the building of your character and you will increase in understanding and raise others with you. It will be made plain to you, sometime, the steps you have been called upon to take—the wherefore and the why!”

CHAPTER XIX.

"Where there is no vision, the people perish."
Solomon.

"LET'S walk over to the dingle and see how the pussy willows are coming on, Agnesia," said Tom one day, when the breaking up of winter was filling earth with the stirring anew of life and the mystery of its burgeoning.

Agnes hastily slipped into a walking skirt, and, catching up a long coat ran lightly down-stairs, her movements showing far more virility than in the preceding fall. As she passed the billiard room, she took from the rack two alpenstocks; then joined Tom, who was calling the dogs.

None of them responded, and the two started across the uplands to an interval beyond. As they went on, Tom gave up alternately calling and whistling for his dogs, and devoted himself to discovering signs of earth's awakening.

It was a brumous day, and the lights which played about them were toned with silver instead of gold. Clear streams purred along beds of tiny stones, their iridescence heightened in effect by the water moving over them. Tiny springs bubbled in pathways where next month white dust would mist the landscape. The saxifrage, feather-sweet, lay close to the stream, growing on the almost naked rocks, waiting for a few more days of mellow warmth before besprinkling the mosses and lichens with petals of glistening white. In her babyhood, Agnes had called these thick masses of

moss the pine forests of the fairies, so like, in miniature, did they appear to her.

Beyond the intervale, the two descended by an abrupt incline to the edge of the swamp, rich in fine old timber, with matted growth of vines and young trees and great brakes, together with sweet briar, whose fragrance already was joining the symphonies of odors—for such there be, even as of color and of tone. Here, as they anticipated, the pussy willows softened with silvery shadows the golding green of the parent stem, and the cat-tails and sedges near at hand moved, colourous, with the new-found joy of life.

Agnes recalled the faces of thinkers she had seen—unimpassioned and stolid until a thought arrests the attention, when every line becomes alive and life flashes into and through the eyes. So the hillside, the great rocks, the dormant vegetation were relieved of brumal cheerlessness because of the flash of life in the silvery, soft and silky pussy willows, and the certain, yet almost imperceptible stirring of revitalized life in the reeds.

It was too early for the hepaticas and, turning from the swamp, they went up hill toward the quarry.

“Why don’t you finish your story, Agnesia?” said Tom, when they were well on their way. “I haven’t seen you working over it lately.”

“I am at a standstill. I cannot accomplish anything more for Sophia, for she is I, and as I am blind as to what to do with myself, of course I do not know what to do with her.”

“Don’t you dare plan anything for the Mattee Sue-and-me part of it but to marry us to each other. Remember, just clear sailing into port of home and love with Mattee Sue. Whew! What an outlook!”

“You may be woefully disappointed when you see her face to face.”

"I'd rather know her mind to mind, first, as I am doing."

"Weigh the matter carefully."

"She may make that totally unnecessary! While I am balancing the steelyards she may be mailing her marriage announcements. She seems to have a whole rookery of admirers. All that keeps my courage up is their number. Look at these!"

He drew from his pocket some anatomical plates.

"I have told her a good deal about my work and she has made these for me. Aren't they admirable! You have no idea," in quite a different tone, "how my love for her is sweetening my relations to all the rest of the world."

"I feel," a shadow of melancholy moved through the tones, "that it cannot be right to approach love to God through love for the individual. It substitutes the personal for the universal."

"What on earth!" Tom halted on the top of a stone wall over which he was about to assist Agnes. "Do you mean that you think personal love is *wrong*!"

"Universal love is the only reservoir from which the personal can flow."

"Of course! But that doesn't mean that it stays in the reservoir or even flows out of it in exactly the same way. Many of us young things don't know there is such a thing as a reservoir, even of drinking water, until years after our fathers and mothers and sisters and lovers have given us many cupfuls of the healing draught. What would God-love flow into and through, if not through streams of manifested personality! Drop that abstract religion and express your real habit of thought. With such barriers to your expression, of course you can't make a story. *Sophia* means wisdom; but wisdom is love!"

"Love is by no means the end of it all. You say

you like meeting Mattee Sue mind to mind; but that isn't heart to heart, by any means."

"How you do pick a fellow up! You never forget anything any one says, and you bring it up, ages later, against him!"

"They who make love their goal are only half way there. I don't know what the next step is—"

"Then you do acknowledge that love has a place?" sarcastically.

"Of course. It is one expression of something so much more mighty!"

"In the abstract it is wisdom, unmanifest or latent. It must be individualized, so to speak, to be of use—as God in Jesus. It must come out of formless into form; it must manifest potential power in acting force."

"Wisdom is the power. Is love the force?"

"I think so. The boundary of this form I call person or personality."

"And it varies with the growth and expression of our potential, which always is God?"

"Yes. Don't you see the difference between this and personalism?"

"Then the combination of both determines the scope of personality?"

"So it seems to me. The more incisively we mark our place in life, the more of the personal and the more personality we manifest."

"'Man is the evidence of God, and the best man is the best evidence,'" Agnes quoted thoughtfully.

"You don't mean, dear, you think it wrong to love father and mother and me and your interests—and Ross Mevin—" he looked far over the hills—"each and all, with an intense and separate and special love! It is your desperate desire to get away from the personal God of 'corporeal and material content' which

your church has taught you, that makes you believe so preposterous a thing. Jupiter, I know what will straighten you out. Love some man as I love Mattee Sue! It will even up lots of things; warm the cockles of your heart; and be the best measure of the tender concern you dole out to the different objects of your regard—if you wish to be mathematically correct in your distribution.” His eyes twinkled.

“I do love people.” Agnes choked back the tears. “You talk as if I didn’t. I am always trying to make them happy, yet I feel so apart I’m heart-broken sometimes.”

“I wonder if that isn’t the trouble, dearie? You ache over what the person you pity is actually enjoying. Bother introspection! That is consideration of personal affairs—a species of flagellation that adds to the mind’s confusion by a repetition that gets nowhere. Meditation is active consideration—”

“How you contradict yourself! You are trying to make me personal by urging me to be impersonal!”

“I expect so! Life is a paradox, anyway! I think you often mix the other fellow up with your own sense of personal exhaustion and self-condemnation. Wipe out your dreadful theology and think healthily all of the time instead of part of the time. Keep on loving persons, preferably a person, but don’t make it so vital that your solar plexus can’t give you a supply equal to the demand.”

“Solar plexus! A prize-ring term! Love does not come from the solar plexus! You will temper your mentality with a little more emotion when you love Mattee Sue a little more deeply. Your laboratories for measuring, through body, the qualities of soul! O Tom!” She clung to him a moment as she sprang toward him from the wall where she had been poised. “One must seek for truth directly within himself by

a gradual detachment and a veritable birth of his higher soul.' ”

“I know what you are quoting. It is a definition of a mystic. I prefer ‘to discover study and contemplate the same divine outpouring, giving forth in divers’ portions, endowed with force, and multiplied to infinity.’ That is the same writer’s definition of occultist, and seems to me far more applicable to this working life in which I am just now. I don’t know anything about a higher soul, either! I find life possible through the personal, which is not a visible, unchanging boundary. The personality of God changes to us, as experience reveals new standards. God *grows*, to me. Maybe He grows to Himself, as we do to ourselves. Nothing can take from me the joy of loving persons. I wouldn’t miss having loved Mattee Sue, if she threw me over to-morrow.”

“I try to remember I am a part of God’s plan and efface myself!”

“I don’t! I remember that because I am a part of God’s plan, to slight me is to slight God’s handiwork. It is my business to see that the plan is glorified by my expression of my part. If I am a diamond, I may not spoil the crown by refusing to shine because I am so conscious of my modesty that I can’t attend to my business. I must realize that I shine to the glory of the whole. I am here, ineffaceable, occupying a place no one else can fill. The part is not I! I am the part and its moving factor. When the good of the whole demands that I move, I move; thus, I am always moving, and so are you. ‘Jesus had a passion for personality and worked with individuals. The contagion of his spirit revealed men to themselves.’ Stop effacing yourself and there won’t be so many Cousin Matildas and Grace Herricks and Aunt Luellas in your horizon.”

“Aunt Luella is different. She needs me, I’m sure,

yet, I can't make up my mind to go to her. Mr. Herman might think I was avoiding him. Her letters are cheery, but they are always preceded by that strange nausea. There it is now—"

"Because I called her to your attention?"

"No, it is a more deeply seated suggestion than that—if it is a suggestion. Still, I am striving to rise superior to its demands."

"It's a shame. I don't understand it," muttered Tom.

"Nor I!—But it is not disturbing me as it did—indeed, none of these things are, for I am being convinced that it is nothing abnormal and nothing wicked, as I once believed. It is the extension of sense perception, and therefore, growth."

"Halloo, what's that?"

They had reached the old quarry—a desolate spot. Cave-like fissures had been made by blasting, and the absence of trees, to the north, gave a wide view; to the south it was densely wooded, and to the east were the meadows and swamp they had been skirting. Tom's exclamation was due to the sight of a glistening expanse of white some distance away.

"I know what it is," said Agnes, after a moment's scrutiny, "the gardener told me this morning that a circus had had a breakdown and halted here. The white streak must be the tents."

"A dreary life, men and beasts herded together! It looks to me as if these quarries were being opened up again. Here are derricks and workmen's tools; but no one in sight. The lot from this shaft looks as if it had just been opened. I wonder where the workmen are. Listen!" Tom cut short his inspection. "Run, Agnes, and save yourself!"

Terrified, but with no loss of self-possession, they saw, lumbering towards them from the thicket, a large

bear, furious and frightened. A heavy chain clanked behind as she came toward them over the shale. There seemed no escape, for behind them stretched acres of boulders and brush.

With sickening horror, Agnes saw Tom striving to entice to himself the anger of the beast in the onslaught he believed was inevitable. Determined to save him, at whatever risk, she ran swiftly to his side, and waved before the great creature's eyes her long wrap which she had taken off and had swung over her chest as a protection against the raw wind.

"Run, Agnes," panted Tom; but, intent on averting the coming terror from her brother to herself, Agnes waved the cloak and moved steadily back. In a frenzy for his sister's safety, Tom endeavored to get between her and the grim pursuer, which, despite all his attempts, lunged rapidly toward her, in fierce acceptance of her challenge, and furious at the insolent flapping of the incomprehensible assailant. He ran after the two, racking his brain for some expedient whereby to turn the anger of the beast upon himself.

Agnes seemed to fly over the ground; but the distance between her and the gruesome pursuer was growing less. With a quick call to Tom, which he did not comprehend, she turned, and sure-footedly ran across a narrow plank bridging a deep cavity.

Ponderously, but surely, the great creature followed. The lithe figure scarcely had left the further end of the frail bridge, when the bear stepped on to the narrow pathway, Tom in mad pursuit. Never, for an instant, did his brain cease to teem with plan after plan for his sister's release, despite their fruitlessness. With awful vividness he pictured the final scene when, with fetid breath upon his sister's face, the creature's awful arms would enfold her. He made great leaps forward.

At least she should not die without him by her side, nor should she die while he lived. In a second, he, too, would be upon the plank. He could almost touch the bear with the tip of his alpenstock.

Suddenly, there came a shock, which threw him back, followed by a snarl, and a rattle of stones. The board Agnes had safely crossed could not, as she had surmised, sustain the weight of seven hundred pounds, and the bear had fallen into the pit.

So close was Tom to the edge, that had he stood on earth or shale, instead of firm set rock, his fate must have been sealed. He had been saved from following the bear only by the balance afforded him by the uplifted alpenstock. In a flash, he realized what his sister had foreseen. He stopped, astounded. She, the mystic, the meditator, had accomplished what he had not even conceived of.

“ ‘The hermits lead the crusade,’ ” he quoted, automatically.

Meanwhile, Agnes had turned and was standing on the other side, looking down at the trapped animal.

“I warned you not to follow!” she called to Tom, whose attention had been drawn momentarily from the immediate scene by the commotion in the brush. The shouts had been coming nearer and a posse of men, among them, the workers in the quarry, broke through the copse, the bear’s keeper at the head.

“Where is she?” he cried. Then his astonished eyes took in the situation, while the growling and plunging in the pit led to the priming of rifles.

“Don’t shoot,” he cautioned, “old Dogskin is frightened to death. Bring on the meat, and she needs water.”

“Let some down in one of those pails. There is a rope over there by that derrick,” and Tom aided in assuaging the thirst of the beast, whose growls grew

less ferocious as the agony of pursuit were forgotten and the hungry maw was filled.

"I shall get her out in decent human fashion if it takes all night," said the keeper. "Thank you fellows for helping me to track her. Walk over to our tents and take a look at our animals. We have a fine lot—and you, too, Miss. I'm sure old Dogskin is grateful to you, whether she knows it or not."

The brother and sister started homeward. The struggle for lives that never before had seemed so sweet to themselves, or so dear to each other; their marvel at the affection of the unkempt keeper for his unlovely charge; the collapse of strength, that, with Agnes, so frequently followed climaxes in her life, held them silent.

Tom assisted her over the rough places with a touch akin to reverence. Something other than thanksgiving was filling his being, for he had been in difficult situations before. He was thinking of Agnes and her denial of personal love at the very moment she willingly, nay, eagerly, turned from an easy escape and jeopardized her life to save his.

They were near home before he broke the silence. He assisted her over the wall and held her close as she had held him for a moment on their way to the quarry. Then he took her sweet face, tired but love-illuminated, between his hands and kissed it.

"If personal devotion such as you have manifested toward me, to-day, is born of your idea of universal love," he said, his voice deepened with emotion, "then, little sister, I have nothing more to say."

CHAPTER XX.

"The one great end of the church should be the building of a state where there is honorable work for every hand, bread for all mouths, clothing for all backs, culture for all minds and love and faith in every heart."

THAT same evening, Agnes attended a lecture by Dr. Wehr, the great psychurgist. Tom joined her later, and, at the close, the two left together. Agnes was wonderfully free from exhaustion after the events of the afternoon, and almost equally free from the state of exaltation which she had begun to fear almost as much as the old-time attendant depressions. She had listened with intent delight to the truths presented by Tom's friend and teacher, which illumined the every day problems of life and gave basis for their solution.

"Wasn't that a wonderful lesson on the building of our lives," she said, all intensity, to one of the company, as she passed her with a merry good evening.

"Yes," came a languid, almost unintelligible voice, "it looks like we must feed our babies more carefully, doesn't it! Mine cries every night; but I give him a little gin and he gets to look for it—every bit like his grandfather."

"Who is a regular toper, and she knows it!" whispered Agnes, aghast, to Tom, her happiness clouded as she realized how little of the lecture's meaning the woman had absorbed. She recovered, as she heard enthusiastic voices ahead.

"They have listened. Let's find out what they have gained," and she drew Tom forward.

"That is worth trying, isn't it," she said enthusias-

tically, as she looked into the bright face of Mary Zeidee.

"I didn't do it, Miss Landell, it was my mother."

"I did not mean to interrupt your conversation, I referred to the lecture—"

"Oh," the girl replied, with peals of laughter, "I was talking about hair combings."

"Try it again, Agnesia," said Tom in an undertone, laughing this time outright at his sister's consternation as she left the group and drew him hastily along.

"Don't people *hear!*" she cried despairingly.

"As far as I can see, the majority carry their limitations wherever they go. They stay at home with their minds and hear very little outside of them. Here is another group. Try it. No, no, let us pass. Without stopping, I can hear Catherine Blaisdale shrieking to the moon that she always goes to bed with cold feet."

"It takes a lot of patience to live what we believe, doesn't it," he continued, as they passed the talkers, "I suppose others have to be patient with us, as well! If it hadn't been funny, I should have been as disgusted as you are now, when, three minutes after Dr. Wehr's explanation that the mind should hold itself receptive to the thoughts of uplift he was about to give them, two women began gloating over an operation. What those two have taken home with them from this evening's study is the same thing they started from home with—hospital wards and disease. Like most texts, the one, 'As ye sow so shall ye reap,' can be read so as to suggest stagnation as well as growth towards betterment."

"To most of us, it has meant that there is but one sowing and one harvest."

"We seek to better our material crops and if one fails plant another. We don't wail forever about the one lost crop."

"There are my blessed Mrs. Burton, Mrs. Bryce and Marian Fosby just ahead. Whatever they may have comprehended, I know they have drawn original conclusions. Good evening, people, may we walk with you?"

"Agnes, didn't that do your heart good, to-night!" Mrs. Bryce greeted the speaker with an affectionate grasp of her arm as she linked it with her own.

"I was sure I should find you ready to talk it over," Agnes responded with relief.

"It goes without saying that the doctor demonstrates it in his life! It sounds *real*," said Mrs. Burton.

"I understood what he meant when he said the word choice conveyed to him no idea of divorcement from Jesus the Christ, no conception of a Christ of the senses; that it just recognizes deeper meanings through the power, active or latent, in every soul. Explain what he meant about tracing through our lives the same processes God used, when, as the Great Architect, He brought the Ideal to expression through the creation as described in Genesis," said Mrs. Bryce.

Tom repeated thoughtfully,—

"I. In complete consciousness, the Great Architect conceived the idea. In love, He kept it alive by brooding over it.

"II. Minutely and accurately He considered each detail of the unfoldment as it grew in the womb of consciousness, nurtured by understanding.

"III. When that grew ready for expression which His perception had seen, and His love had fostered, He declared the inherent life of each detail as it became manifest.

"IV. Then, did the Spirit of God move on the face of the waters. Waters, you know, is a first expression of principle. This consciously and intelligently con-

ceived, nurtured and directed idea of the Great Architect, filled with His vital power, expanded through specified avenues of activity, sequentially, till it expressed itself in the embodiment called man, possessed of the breath of life. This *divine* breath entitled man to become coworker with God, though not, as yet, conscious of this heritage. That knowledge came with the birth of the moral concept—the awakening of the intuitive. With this conscious wakening, he began to individualize in the economy of life. The so-called perfection of Eden's garden seemed a crude waste field of immaturity and ignorance, in view of man's next estate as moral entities. Man's consciousness became steadily more infilled with the spirit of the breath of life—and that means the growing within us of the Christ—until, through stages of growth of which the Old Testament is a sequential history, humanity is proven to be the manifest processes of the growing consciousness of God. Through billions of avenues of perception and selection we call minds is distributed the realization that after all we are One Mind, which is Christ Jesus Our Lord. Dr. Wehr went on to say that as this realization becomes more universal, new types of expression will arise. The prototype of this expression is Jesus. As the beetle that crawls the ground is to us, so are we to our possibilities."

"It makes it so much clearer to me to talk it over," said Marian Fosby. "I am a college graduate—accustomed to lectures; but even I find it difficult to take in so much at one sitting, and I think it spoils the spirit to be scribbling down notes, instead of dreamily absorbing the many influences that go to make a lecture."

"I am glad to be told something that gives us a legitimate right to be proud of ourselves, instead of that we are nothing. It gives us courage to know that

it is our happy right to grow and that our growth inevitably assists the growth of others," said Mrs. Burton.

"He made a fine point about visioning clearly, thereby giving every message conveyance through the nerve centres, 'to which the action is related, by nature,' and which, by our selections, we have constructed, through past cycles," said Marian.

"It makes me more willing to shoulder my disadvantages—to feel that they are not unjust burdens. It makes me concerned to lay to-day's foundations well for to-morrow's building," added Mrs. Burton.

"I like the point he made,—that these building materials are *qualities*, and that noble qualities build body structures of probity and honor, of love and intuition and other attributes, which, as we grow in His likeness shall be revealed," said Mrs. Bryce, as she considered point after point of the talk in which they had found so much profit and enjoyment. "How is the Bible story of the creation like our lives?"

"It is this way. As soon as we reach an age to make it possible—far earlier than we sometimes think—we must *know* what we desire to make manifest; we must consider the results if what we conceive comes to maturity. We must direct the mind's activity toward the wished-for end, not allowing adverse impressions to dim the idea. This may be done in an instant or it may take years. Like will, these stages are reached in action and do not depend on time. Will-*forcing* methods shall not prevail. They shut off the vision. Internal uncertainty also halts processes."

"What you say translates that part of the creed I have not been able to accept—I believe in the resurrection of the body." Marian waited eagerly for a reply.

"It is beautiful to think that embodiments succeed

each other uninterruptedly, in phases temporal, spiritual, and what next doth not appear," said Agnes.

"I have often wondered why many who think purely possess frail bodies," said Marian, who was not strong.

"Have you ever noticed," said Tom, "that health is no greater asset than any other one asset, and that, after all, it is a gauge of our trust in good—our acknowledgment of our soul's expression. However brutal this may sound can you not look back and truly say that, as far as your experience goes, ill health announces faith in an *imperfect* idea of yourself, your heritage or your relation to the Father?"

"I cannot feel that is the whole of it," mused Agnes. "One may be very near perfection on a material plane of consciousness; but a soul in travail, born into a higher vision, but not yet equal to coping with the knowledge poured in upon itself, feels intimately its kinship with the universe and suffers for and with it, and not for and with itself. Sick with the anguish of others; weighted with responsibilities of which it is becoming aware,—such an one is far beyond the man who is materially well and *asleep*."

"What is this consciousness you talk about?" asked Mrs. Burton.

"The only way I can explain it is, that it is the knowledge that we exist, innate within each individualized portion of God called the human soul. This knowledge is dormant, almost wholly inhibited, until eons of involving and evolving wisdom waken it. We may follow the growth of soul consciousness through the expressions—cell-attraction; awareness; blind instinct; the reaching out of instinct to a state less than reason—a stage I call psychic. As consciousness becomes more clearly defined to the intelligence, reason sits upon a throne and rules. Then, the consciousness of the soul that it is infinite gives reason

deductions and inductions of wider and wider scope, until we find that we are possessed of something above and superior to reason,—intuition and spiritual insight. After all, the explanation comes through realization of this consciousness rather than through words. Do you leave us here? And you too, Mrs. Burton? Good night!"

"It's chilly," said Tom, as he and his sister went on together.

"I know my hands are cold. I must have dropped my gloves."

"Put one hand in my pocket. When that is warm, come round to the other side and warm the other one."

Agnes slipped her hand into the capacious pocket, and, sweetly restful, they walked on in silence. Suddenly, she began to tremble, and clung to him convulsively.

"What is it?" said Tom, startled.

"Over there! The motor car is wrecked."

"I don't see anything! What is the matter with you!"

"It's Mattee Sue!"

"Where do you see her?"

"Under the motor car, beyond the lake, to the south!"

"Are you crazy! What do you mean! How do you know it is she?"

"I've seen her before—but now—don't ask me any questions—for I can't answer them. She is pinned under the car."

"Tell me! You don't know the agony you are causing me! I love her! Do you hear! When have you seen her?"

"Hush! Oh, it's terrible! Here comes help!"

Tom tried to keep still; but his anxiety forced him to expression.

"Tell me, dear, when and where you have seen her?"

"The night you left her letter in my room and found it in my hand."

"Why didn't you tell me then! I thought you confided in me, always!" reproachfully.

"You went away at once. Tom, hush!"

For some seconds she seemed to watch intently. Then she asked,

"Have you a letter from Mattee Sue in your pocket?"

"I have."

"Could my fingers have touched it?"

"Yes. It is the only paper in the pocket your hand was in."

"Do you suppose I was enabled to see her through touching that—is it—"

"Psychometry? Perhaps so. Touch again, and try to see something more."

She did so, and was silent for, what seemed to Tom, a long time.

"I can see only the great flame. Now it is dark. There is nothing."

"Try again, there's a dear."

"It is not right! This very evening Dr. Wehr warned us against approaching knowledge by forced, unnatural methods. This sort of thing has happened to me before, but I have never connected the cause and the result. I am not ready for this development or it would not frighten me. It would come naturally like any other assimilated knowledge. This belongs to that other plane he spoke about—the one between instinct and reason. It comes of a negative, dependent attitude and, perhaps, because of an exhausted physique, instead of one rested and full of positive trust."

"Try it again, for my sake." Tom's wish to investigate phenomena retired, for once, as his anxiety for the love of his heart increased.

Agnes held the letter close; but the vision was gone.

"I have done wrong," she sobbed, hysterically. "I knew it was sinful to do that thing premeditatedly, before I was ready. If it comes when I do not court it, perhaps God will forgive me—for I don't know how to prevent it—but to go on coaxing it after I had been warned—I yielded, for love of you! That is always what personal love leads to—the following of personality, instead of principle."

"You didn't court it," said Tom, exasperatedly. "It came to you! For heaven's sake, don't lay it to personal love! You got all nerved up, this afternoon, then came the reaction. In that state, you went into a crowd. Do put the cause where it belongs! Wasn't it right for you to save me this afternoon? Was it against your principle to be so personal?"

"I'm afraid I wouldn't have been strong enough to refuse if the two had been opposed."

"You never get into these frenzies of abnormal righteousness unless you are nerve-exhausted. Do you believe the vision is a real one? I'm going to telegraph. Will you go back with me, or shall I take you home and send the message from there? Make up your mind," as she hesitated, "here we are talking, while I am in the dark as to whether she is dead or alive."

"I will go back with you, and stop this folly! Let me walk on and get the air in my face. Don't speak to me!"

She set off at a rapid pace over the smooth road, increasing her walk until she fairly ran. To her chagrin, as she turned a corner suddenly she found herself face to face with a policeman.

"What's the matter?" he blurted, then, recognizing her, he touched his helmet. "Beg pardon, Miss Landell, what can I do for you?"

"Holloa, Robinson," and, to Agnes' relief, Tom caught up. "My sister is doing a bit of sprinting. Her only chance to exercise outside the orthodox walk is by moonlight."

The patrolman laughed and went on, and Agnes, calmed by the encounter, joined her brother.

"Tell me something more about your visions of Mattee Sue?" Tom pleaded after a silence.

"I can't, except that she appeared to me so distinctly that I was about to offer her a chair, when I realized it was an apparition. I suppose we are phenomenons, too,—that is, our shapes—don't you?—but there was something else that frightened me—I saw you in the midst of flames."

"I'm all right, and I think the reason is that, no matter what position I find myself in, I am sure there will be a way out for me. See? But I confess, I am all worked up about this motor business. Here goes! Send this at once." He delivered the message to the sleepy operator, and the two turned toward home. Agnes was very tired, but, to her relief, her hysteria had departed.

"Why do you suppose these things come to me, Tom?"

"Don't be like the monkey, at Harvard, years ago who heard the electric bell ring, traced the sound to the button, then to the wire, and wanted to scratch open that; but—spoiling my moral—they didn't allow him to kill himself. Let it ring, and it serves you; investigate the reason for, and it kills you."

"If one is a monkey—yes. If not, it serves you ten thousand times the more."

Tom laughed.

"You are never too tired to get ahead of me. I shall sit up for the answer."

"Let me know when it comes," and bidding him good night at the foot of the stairs she went to her room. She heard him whistle to his dogs, and, by the moonlight, watched him tramp to and fro on the well-kept driveway. The slight click of the gravel under his feet made a little monody of sound as he walked to the big gates and down the road and back again, while the moon mounted higher and higher in the sky, climbing slowly along the mountain peaks of cloud, till, tired out, she fell asleep behind them, leaving the April night in drowsy gloom.

It struck twelve. Tom could feel the message speeding upon its way. He wondered that it could be so slow. One! It must have been delayed! He went into the house with Trumbull, the setter, flung himself on the couch and dreamed. How the girl had entwined herself about his heart! Was that the door-bell? No, the clock, striking the half hour! He must be sure not to let the messenger wake the household! What a marvel Agnes was, to be sure! The bell! No, the three-quarter hour! He must have drowsed! How could he, while even now, Mattee Sue might be in horrible agony, or dead, and he had never seen her face!

"What was that, Trumbull, did you hear anything?" For the dog had pricked up his ears and growled. "Hush, Trumbull, good fellow, it's all right," and he went hastily to the door. His teeth chattered; he could scarcely control his knees. Never before had he known what fear was; but that night, it enswathed him. He was afraid.

The clock struck four-thirty as he met the messenger. Not waiting to open the telegram, he leaped, two

steps at a time, to Agnes' room, Trumbull following anxiously, unwilling to leave his master alone.

"Agnes," he whispered hoarsely at the door. "It has come. Read it. I can't see, somehow!"

Agnes took the yellow missive from his shaking fingers and read it twice, her eyes brimming with a merriment her lips refused to conceal.

"'Of course I'm safe,' " she translated slowly, while Tom listened, tensely. "'Tommy Tompkins pulled me out! How did you know? Mattee Sue Romaine.' "

"Tommy Tompkins!" impolitely, Tom caught the telegram from his sister's hand, and crushed it. "Tommy Tompkins, indeed! The little kangaroo! I'd like to kick him!" and he went down-stairs, quite forgetting to thank Agnes for her interest in his vengeful desire to punch Tommy Tompkins' head!

CHAPTER XXI.

"Let them find out what my heart now hopes and fears."

Erkel Elek.

"Gustaga, Georgia, Saturday Morning.

"What do you mean, Mr. Landell, by frightening respectable persons out of their wits in such a fashion as you did last night! I'd have you to understand you roused the whole town of Gustaga! If you knew the place, you'd realize a telegraph boy sent with a message at any hour after bed time, never goes to the correct house first, but makes a point of waking up the entire neighborhood,—a sort of revenge, I suppose for having to make the trip.

"Your wire came at one o'clock. The boy went to the next door, and roused two big dogs and five puppies, together with a very mad man who said *words*.

"Then he went across the street, where they have a parrot. I am glad to say she called out words too, for it helped me, who wanted to say them but mustn't for reasons religious and diplomatic.

"Then he went to a house on the other side where lives a very mean girl who goes with me but doesn't like me. Mamma wonders why I always invite her to things. It's because I'm afraid not to! Her father came out, and he said *words* too, and told the boy to go to some far off place with a very short name and, if he ever came there again with a telegram in the dead of night, he'd transfix him.

"We were all up at our house, because we were too excited over the accident to go to bed, and by this time, we began to pity the boy. I knew just how creepy his heels felt, with all that yapping going on behind them, because mine used to feel that same way when I was in short skirts and those same dogs or some more like them, were saying their prayers at my feet.

"I never should have had your telegram if papa hadn't been

expecting one on some business matters and it finally dawned on his sleepy brain that the boy might be looking for him; so he hailed him at a venture.

"By this time the poor thing was quite discouraged at being so persecuted for doing his duty; but then, if he had had more worldly experience, he would have known that is what one generally gets for doing one's duty.

"When papa saw it was for me, he was so surprised he nearly collapsed, and wanted to know what it was all about. I read it, and we were frightened to death about the whole thing. The accident was bad enough, but this telegram was so spooky we have shivered steadily ever since and refused to believe it malaria.

"The whole square knew I had had a message and ten girls were over before breakfast to find out what it was all about. I told them I had a great-uncle in his dotage, who always telegraphed me 'happy returns' every year, on the exact hour I was born—two in the morning—no matter how much we hinted that we preferred sleep to congratulations. I always try to have at least a grain of veracity in my statements and though you are not my great-uncle, you must be abnormally far-sighted *to be able to see way down here!*

"However, there really was an accident. I have not told you this before for I think you need disciplining for frightening me so with that telegram. I never was so terrified in all my life. I used to walk in the cemetery, for mamma will not let me promenade where there are men acting as sort of rail fences along the pavement. What *possible* harm can men do, I should like to know—especially the kind that lines up on the sidewalk and reminds you of mud walls in a Mexican village—just about as soulful and intelligent. So, of course, the cemetery would be the only place left, and you have spoiled that for me. Mamma does not seem afraid of having me walk where there are dead men, but she is *awfully nervous* at having live ones near me—I wonder why!

"Tommy Tompkins was such a darling! I have wanted to fling my arms about his neck, oh, ever so many times, since; but papa says I ought, *really*, to let him take the initiative, so I suppose I must, don't you? He will not be slow, I am very sure, for, he adores me, and now that he has saved my life he

has a sort of first-mortgage on it—or would you say, second? Tommy, bless his dear faithful heart—it is *such* a comfort to have one's friends *right* beside one in time of trouble—Tommy was *right beside me* and we had been having a very confidential talk between bumps. I must confess that when we crossed street-car tracks and mud holes, our voices jerked so that some of the *very most confidential* sentences became rather public property, and somewhat mixed. For instance, I had asked him to a chafing-dish party and he was just saying 'I'd love to'—at least, I suppose it was—when the car bumped and he bit his tongue and said, 'I love you' instead. Of course it was a mistake. Like Z'Etta's minister lover—she had refused him the night before and he was feeling very low, so when he rose for the invocation, Sunday morning, instead of saying 'Let us unite in prayer,' he said, 'Let us unite in love.' I dove for my hymn book which I had not dropped and cracked my head so loud it sounded through the church and turned my smiles to tears and some others' tears to smiles—and Tommy Tompkins—oh yes, that reminds me—Tommy was being awfully nice and was telling me that he adored—waffles, I believe it was—when whiz, bang, there was such a smoke, and why, I couldn't tell just what happened; but the next thing I knew, I was in a mix and the car blazing. That blessed Tommy Tompkins jumped and pulled me out from under the car where I was nearly suffocated. *He risked his noble life for me!* I shall never forget Tommy Tompkins for what he did last night. But how on earth did you know about it! I sincerely hope you do not see *everything* I do, it would be so embarrassing! Tell me at *once*, for you have given me a perfectly dreadful fright and I feel quite collapsed. It is weird enough to be choked by flames and gasoline, without being surrounded by intelligences and spooks!

"You would better write and thank Tommy Tompkins for saving my life, for, *really*, in case you *do* care for my friendship, it was a very narrow escape for me, and mamma and papa were *quite prostrated*. They are *so* grateful to Tommy Tompkins.

"Yours,

"MATTEE SUE ROMAINE."

"Agnes, listen to that!"

Disgustedly, Tom threw the foregoing letter into his

sister's lap and ploughed his hands deep into his pockets, jealously watching, from under his eyebrows, the expression of Agnes' face. "If I had Tommy Tompkins within reach, I'd kick him round the square and back again. *Tommy*, indeed! I thank heaven, my makeup has attached no such curtailment to me! Tommy! Pouf!"

"On the contrary, as Mattee Sue says, you should be deeply grateful to him for saving her life," his sister replied soberly. Inwardly, she was convulsed.

"Yes, sir, round the square and back again," and he savagely kicked a hassock out of his way.

"This settles it! I am going to Gustaga, to put a spoke in the wheel of that upstart, Tommy Tompkins. When I get there, he had better look out!"

He tramped vengefully down-stairs. In half an hour he returned, looking half sheepish but wholly determined. Settling himself on a footstool before her, he rested his head on the arm of a chair near-by.

"You have such splendid intuitions, tell me, Agnes, do you really suppose she is in love with that popin-jay, 'Tommy'!"

"I would not attempt to tell you!"

Agnes was glad that her face was not within his vision, as he looked intently into a mirror.

"That is the bother with intuitions," Tom growled, even in the midst of his love perplexities unable to release his mind from scientific considerations. "Intuitions are founded on law! You must discover the law to have your powers of permanent and reliable value," he continued, half jesting. "Just think! All these months without my seeing her. What possessed me! She is a girl in ten thousand," he hummed, "the only girl for me! Confound those Gustaga fellows! She may marry before I even catch a glimpse of her!"

"I confess, I have wondered, in view of the proxim-

ity of the South and the North, that you have not been sufficiently interested to visit her."

"I wonder, too, in the face of the enlightenment Tommy Tompkins has given me!" he laughed. He was getting over his heroics, and becoming himself again. "It seems to take bombs to stir me up as well as you, doesn't it! I wonder I never have been impelled to go to see her! Until now, I have been wholly content with her letters."

"Oh, you were amused and even interested at the romance. You had been properly introduced, so the excitement of a possible 'repulse' was removed. Like many of your sex, you were perfectly sure that a patient Griselda of the fourteenth century was sitting in a twentieth-century house, awaiting your pleasure. It's the man in you. Then, your work was paramount. Now you have a different perspective. That is all. What are you looking at so steadily in the mirror? Your eyes haven't left it since you sat down. What is it?"

"Myself! Jupiter! I've never looked at myself with any sort of discrimination before in all my life. Isn't love a corker—an optician—an oculist—an eye-glass-grinder! By the way, I wonder if Mrs. Lavelle had a *bona fide* love affair while South! I believe she had; for the morning she showed me Mattee Sue's photo she hid the picture of a smashing looking man—never offered to show it. She looked as pink and pretty as you used to when Ross Mevin came about here so much. When would you go, Agnesia?"

"Sometime next fall," teased Agnes.

"Fall, nothing! I am going next week."

"I think I shall go to Aunt Luella's next week, too. Her letters are bright and she says she's well and happy; but I feel that the peculiar impression I re-

ceive, previous to the receipt of her letters, should be regarded."

"I wouldn't go. It will do your mind no good to scratch the electric wire for the sake of getting nearer the death-dealing fluid—"

"Or the life-giving truth—"

"I wouldn't go, unless you want to, or unless she lets you know in twentieth-century fashion that she needs you. It upsets you—and her, too, as you can't stay with her all the time. I do wish you had sufficient influence with her to get her to employ some other business-manager than Jack Jenkins. He may be a shrewd financier with a keen brain, but he keeps it constantly befuddled. Do you suppose you could have any influence?"

"I shouldn't like to interfere, for she told me she was going to leave her money to me and I don't know whether she ever made the will—"

"I expect it would go to the state if she doesn't make one. She has no legal heirs, has she? Her husband was father's brother and that makes her, of course, no kin to us. Sort of a bother, these sensitive-nesses, yet I see, very well, how you feel. Now I am going to talk with father."

Tom found Mr. Landell in the park. Together they walked under the singing pines, the father's heart mounting, with his son's, the rosy heights of love.

"Go on your way, laddie," the father said as they neared home. "Measure your ideas by the standard of your ideal and be sure of your compass and the rule."

They walked on silently. The winds of the fragrant afternoon blew refreshingly upon them. The sky was very clear, and they watched, up, up, almost out of sight, the swooping circles of a bird as it swayed and

swirled, diving into and out of little clouds of mist ebbing and flowing over the low-lying hilltops.

"I thank you, sir, for taking this into your heart with your great sympathy, which is the only kind that listens to the trifles of others and gives to them the importance they bear the owner," and Tom grasped his father's hand. "In other words, you are a trump! I hope I shall circle about in my skies as successfully as that bird is doing."

"So do I, laddie," he added, whimsically. He looked into the eyes of his tall son, with the same tenderness as when he was a baby at his knee. "The eagle must let the young ones go; still, he loves to swoop under them, sometimes, and catch them on his back for a second, lest their wings should weaken before they have fully learned to fly."

CHAPTER XXII.

*"Thou thinkest, sun most bright,
That naught is radiant as the glowing light,
When, in springtide hours,
Thou fashionest the flowers;
But, lo! thou palest quite
Before the eyes of Amaryllis."*

Louis XIII.

STANDING before a drawing table, on the north side of the broad verandah of a fine old Southern home, was a young girl. Devonienses, Marechal Niels and Dorothy Perkins roses enclosed her as in a bower, shadowing her a little from the golden sunshine that proclaimed a Southern land. It was the first week in April; but no cutting winds jeopardized the beautiful neck and arms bared to the soft, mellow air.

Meditatively, she viewed the anatomical plat on which she was at work, the keen sensibility of her lovely face translating her discontent or her satisfaction, as, with erring touch, she perpetrated some crudity, or, with a delicacy found only in the artist, inborn, brought out lines in clear contrast of color, with dexterous strokes of pencil or brush.

"Mauma!"

There was an exquisite trailing of inflection through her scale of tone. "Isn't it *very* interesting, that liking a man makes you like w'at he likes. Whoever would believe it! Tom Landell has made his study of Psychurgy and Biology and all the other queer things *so* attractive, that not only am I willing, I am absolutely pleased at reading w'atever he sends me, and am

positively anxious to elaborate as many skulls of abnormals and brains of Plato as he wants me to."

She moved the table into a better light, raising her arm to push aside a drooping rose which tantalized her ear, lingering a moment in that attitude, as her gaze seemed to sink into the green of the weeping willows. With the intent receptiveness of the artist, she felt its ethereal tones make color music with the militant Spanish bayonets and the rich green of the magnolias. The deep note of the city's industries played a sounding bass for the fluttering staccatos of wandering petals and falling leaves.

It was time for the mail from the North, and, while watching for the postman, the young girl's face was held in beautiful enchantment by the sweetness of her dream. A witching little tremor at the corner of her mouth became allured, by her happiness, into the open confession of a smile.

"It is my day for a letter," musing. Evidently it has become a matter of days—this Northern correspondence—for true it was, that the great needle of circumstance, threading its way through the plans of men's lives, had drawn together the affairs of these two, through the kindly offices of the learned Dr. Genung and the sympathetic Mrs. Lavelle.

"Mauma, do you suppose I shall *ever* see him?" speaking her thought unconsciously, without seeming recognition that there might be more than one *him* in all the world.

"I think it fairly possible," Mrs. Romaine replied dryly, with the strange perspicacity which enables loving mothers to reach into the invisible and draw the right thread of their daughter's meditations.

"I wonder if he will be as nice as his letters?" Aimlessly, Mattee Sue picked up a paper, looking over it at random. Suddenly, with an impatient gesture,

she tossed it from her, to draw it back to her again, puzzlingly. With a tender expression on her face, Mrs. Romaine passed into the house, and again Mattee Sue turned to the beautiful street, looking down the gothic vista of trees, past the pretty picture of nurses wheeling their radiant charges up and down in the sunshine.

Finally the postman appeared, his bag over his shoulder. He was some time in delivering the mail along the way and she watched him anxiously. As he approached, she moved to the edge of the piazza with a lissom grace uniquely her own, and extended her hand for the Romaine budget.

As the postman passed on, a well set-up man came, with swinging step, toward the alluring figure on the verandah. He awaited her attention in respectful silence, though his eyes, deep as mountain lakes, challenged her response; but, having glanced once through the packet she was examining it a second time, a puzzled wrinkle of disenchantment on her smooth white forehead. It was evident that she saw him, but was too downcast with her disappointment to feel her responsibility as a hostess. She was turning, as if to enter the house, when the stranger intercepted her retreat.

“Is this Miss Mattee Sue Romaine?”

A twinkle of amusement mingled with his deference.

Called, thus, to herself, Mattee Sue rested her eyes meditatively upon the speaker, in a manner intended to be cold, but which instead gave her a witching dignity like that of a gracious Queen Titania. Her attempted severity yielded slowly to inquiry which peeped, like an awakened hope, out of her mind and through the windows of her soul. The delicately moulded chin was brought exquisitely into relief, as it tilted upward and outward, with the piquancy of an inquisitive bird.

A flash of color swept over her face and died quickly away.

"May I be proxy for the letter?"

The man advanced a little, still remaining on the driveway.

As Mattee Sue observed him critically, a light grew in her eyes, until it bubbled forth—

"Tom Landell! Aren't you *ashamed* to come here like a second telegram, without a particle of reason for doing so!"

"Isn't seeing you reason—"

"It is simply terrible on one's nerves to have one's friends act like shooting stars, on the twelfth of August. You look and look and they *never* appear—that is, if you *care* enough about them, to watch—and then, w'en you've *forgotten everything in the world about them*, down they flash, and out of sight before you know it."

"I won't flash out of sight, be assured. Won't you let me come in?"

"I ought to have left you to announce yourself as you should. Waiting would have been good for your soul, besides!"

"It isn't in your heart to be cruel! I know that by the kindly manner in which you held out your hands to me, even before you recognized me."

"I wasn't holding out my hands to you, but for the letter you should have sent me and didn't."

"I'll never disappoint you again, and even this time I have brought you more than I have withheld—myself! Mayn't I come in?"

"Maybe it is not you at all!"—slowly withdrawing her hands, that, as Tom had challenged her with doing, she had extended to him at recognition. Piqued, as she thought how plainly she had betrayed her pleasure at his coming, she struggled to recover ground. Her

eyes searched deeper into the eyes looking up to hers. She stiffened momentarily, relenting as he continued,

"I do not question that you are my rhetoric queen. *I know.*"

"Easily, sir, by the number of the house!"

"I won't step on that piazza until you say you believe—"

"W'y, Tom Landell, you have to *learn to believe* in people!"

"Such an one as you knows, at once, on the internal evidence of the man. You believed in me when I first wrote, or you'd never have answered. You look just as I have always seen you in my visions—your hair, your eyes, your voice. You do believe in me! Tell me quickly! I so want to come up the steps, after the long journey of a thousand miles, *to you!*"

"I believe it is you—but—" She poised like a startled bird before it takes flight—for, in an instant, Tom was beside her, looking into her eyes from above, as she stood, now, looking into his.

They settled themselves on the piazza, and, bit by bit, reviewed their acquaintance, dropping badinage as they knit closer the threads of their friendship. Time spun itself away, till the return of Max and Etta from a drive. The appearance of Mr. and Mrs. Romaine was succeeded by summons to dinner. Like an old friend, Tom was included in the dining party. As they were leaving the piazza, Major Verness cantered up. As he alighted, Mattee Sue took a quick step forward, placing both hands in his.

"Why won't one hand do?" growled Tom to himself. "I wonder who he is, anyway."

He was answered by Mattee Sue, who led the newcomer to him, flashing words, smiles and laughter in such rapid succession that Tom felt the delicious exhilaration of a summer shower.

"I am so *very* glad to see you, Major Verness," she was saying while everybody was shaking hands. "I began to wonder if you had quite forgotten your little sweetheart that you had not greeted her home from school."

"She knows I could not have withstood the light of her countenance had I been near enough to avail myself of it. I have been away."

"Oh, Major, I'm so glad you realize I'm quite grown up, so you may give me the Ph. D. grade of compliment. How I used to envy Mrs. Lavelle w'en you made your truly grown-up speeches to her. I don't know how much of them she believed; but you must know that I know you just like to keep your English flexible by use."

"Mrs. Romaine"—the Major turned to his hostess, gallantly offering his arm, "Miss Mattee Sue does me wrong. Am I so palpably in need of exercises in language that I must practice on ladies! You do not suppose I say to every one such things as I say to you?" he laughed back at Mattee Sue.

"Oh, yes, far brighter to some,—quite dazzling, *sometimes*,—*sometimes*, you know. You must have said it all before, you say it so glibly—quite as I do after I've practised my Latin rules—*ever so many times*."

"It takes more than repetition to teach such finesse as yours, young lady," and the Major pushed Mrs. Romaine's chair into place. "If you consider my skill in speaking truth due to practice, how can I do other than lay your astute reception of it to the same cause!"

"You see, Mr. Landell,"—Mattee Sue drew Tom into the conversation, "Major Verness is one of my very oldest friends."

"Yes, Mr. Landell, I had the pleasure of knowing this young lady at the advanced age of three weeks

and have been her devoted admirer ever since. Your name is familiar, sir. Landell! Landell!"

"My hero of rhetoric fame, Major Verness."

"To be sure. Doubtless you bow to rhetoric henceforth. Already, it has made a traveler of you, I see."

Then followed a delicious medley of repartee, to which Tom listened, fascinated—a babel of sounds into which *the one voice for him* was merged, but never lost. His eyes were fixed on Mattee Sue. He felt that he could listen, forever, to her dainty little upward portamento. Every new and bewitchingly graceful poise of the head and quick change in the flashing birdlike motions entranced him. She was, indeed, an interesting study, as swiftly she affiliated to herself, intuitionally, what passed about her.

"Tell us about your last conquest," the Major beamed at her, over the soup.

"No one is paying the *slightest* attention to me now, sir"—the recollection that she had shown herself unfeignedly glad to see Tom rankling in her flirtatious little head, while, with the skill of a veteran, she was planning how to retrieve.

"They say you do the boys very mean!" The Major was, himself, a veteran in the conquest of hearts, and read Mattee Sue like the diplomat he was.

"Oh no, sir," and fun fairly garbed her, scintillating like the iridescence of the butterfly.

"I hear you cut them all up." The Major, on the warpath for amusement, was covertly watching Tom while ruthlessly dragging forth the scalps of Mattee Sue's sweethearts. "Preston Bird told me, the other night, that you will tell him that it is a very pleasant evening and when, innocently, he agrees with you, you ask him so insistently what he finds in it so pleasant, that you ball him all up."

"Oh—er—w, w'at fun is there in talking to a man

who is always unanimous!" cooed Mattee Sue, in a chromatic of tones that made Tom prickle all over with the winsomeness of it. "Preston Bird does me so mean! He listens to me with *such* a superior air! He makes me perfectly furious! I'll talk and talk, about *quantities* of things he *ought* to have at his tongue's end, and all I get back is that *perfectly infuriating*, 'W'y, I don't know!' I nearly asked him his name, once, to see if he would say, 'I don't know,' to that! But thank the twin sisters and the big bear and the dipper and somebody's tears up in the constellations, I stopped myself in time, for it is the only thing he *does* know, and the *one* thing he would *never* stop talking about, if you got him started."

"Where is Gilbert Baynes?"

"W—oh—erw—y," and she dimpled bashfully. "He wanted to teach me to play the guitar and we had a *mighty* happy time for about fifteen minutes, then, w'en I couldn't get something or other about the fingering, he took my hand—as if that would ever get anything into my head—and told me the only way to learn expression in music was to love the teacher. Now, Major, don't you know that is too much! Who wants to love anybody—this weather! I call it right hard work, loving, don't you!"

"Possibly so!" the Major meditated. "But I don't see how you can help loving Tommy Tompkins. Certainly he saved your life."

Mattee Sue blushed a most adorable shell pink. It seemed to come, for all the world, from a tugging at the heart-strings. Perhaps it was suppressed laughter at the thought of Tom Landell's appearance on the strength of her recently written eulogy of this hero of the motor car.

"Mr. Landell, *please* do excuse us for talking about all these men you do not know and are not the *very*

least bit interested in. You will meet them all *very soon*, especially Tommy Tompkins. I might not be here now, were it not for him," sighing pensively. "You may see him at any minute, for, since the accident, he has been here constantly."

This was said with childlike innocence, though the remark was advanced, with admirable skill, toward Tom, who settled his pieces upon the board of wit, primed for the game.

"I am fascinated, Miss Romaine, with the *melody* of your remarks, though my intellect has not yet translated the symphony of sound. In other words, I must confess I had not the slightest idea you were talking about men, for I have not understood a word of what you have been saying."

Mr. Romaine laughed gleefully at his daughter's check. Mattee Sue withdrew her pawn and advanced her queen toward the Major's side of the board.

"Mr. Landell is a *very great* friend of Mrs. Lavelle's, Major Verness. Do you recall Mrs. Lavelle, Major?"

"With pleasure, you little mischief." The color rose to the Major's face, and, receding, left it rather pale.

"You should have seen Mrs. Lavelle set all the old bachelors by the ears, Mr. Landell," Mattee Sue teased. "It was *perfectly* delicious."

"You know we Southerners gloat over love contests like Indians over scalps," said Mr. Romaine, in whose speech was apparent the same elision of the medial H as in his younger daughter; also, the same quaint lingering on the U until it reminded Tom of the honey he used to sip in his boyhood, through the winding horn of the columbine, so long drawn and sweet it was. "I was grateful enough to all of them for giving me such a race to watch. I had not been interested in an up-to-date contest for so long, I had

forgotten even how to hold the stakes. It dropped ten years off my shoulders, sir, just to watch the score."

"I judge Miss Romaine keeps you busy." Tom tried to draw the conversation back to his rhetoric queen; but she skilfully checked his move.

"It was such fun, Mr. Landell. Mrs. Lavelle told both Colonel Shelby and the Major that she was going to the Baptist church, but went to the Methodist; and there they both were, w'en meeting was over, waiting to walk home with her."

"That waiting at the church door to nab your best girl was the greatest fun in the world in our courting days, wasn't it, Fanny!" Mr. Romaine turned to his wife.

"Yes, Ted, I acknowledge that anticipations of that closing event of the morning service have sustained me through many a long, dreary sermon."

"Where is Mrs. Lavelle, now, Mr. Landell?" the Major asked nonchalantly.

"The Major has not the slightest idea!" was Mattee Sue's teasing sarcasm. "He never writes to her, Mr. Landell, of co'se not! He never sends her his photos, certainly not!"

"I knew it!" Tom exclaimed impetuously; but, having said so much, he refused to divulge to the laughter-loving company his half revelation of Mrs. Lavelle's attitude of mind on the eventful day of his own introduction to the pictured face of Mattee Sue.

CHAPTER XXIII.

*"The May-time, the May-time,
It fills the world with flowers;
God seeth what I yearn for,
With all my quickening powers.*

*"For love is all my longing;
A maid as fair as May,
To bring her to my hearthstone,
And make the springtime stay."*

"MAUMA, I like Tom Landell; but it will *never* do to let him see it too plainly," was Mattee Sue's discriminating remark to her mother, the morning after Tom's introduction to the Romaine family. "I shall invite *all* the men I can think of, to meet him. I never knew *anybody*, before, that did not make a dead set at love-making right away; but, after the first minute, when he truly showed how glad he was to see me, you'd think I was just his chum. I didn't quite fancy it at first, then the novelty became *perfectly delicious*, and now it feels rather comfortable to sit and talk sense without having to be on the *qui vive* to parry speeches. Most of the men that call on me I sit and giggle at, inside or out, according to the man; but Tom really talks, and w'at is more, with a talking man, he lets you talk too. W'y Mauma, he talks religion so that it sounds like every day common sense; and science, so it is as real as love-making and twice as interesting. Oh! Here he comes. Mayn't I get the Major to take us to the Locks? It isn't w'at it used to be, but it is one of the things to have seen.

"Oh Mr. Landell," she called, as he approached, "I want you to see the Locks before you go away," purposely trailing a fleeting touch of melancholy through the tones, recovering her vivacity with admirably simulated effort. "They are ruining it and everything picturesque, nowadays, making us comfortable. They cut down shade trees to give us good roads and dam up water to give us light. Life is very paradoxical, isn't it!"

"As much so as quoits," assented Tom.

"And the more you play it in the whole the more fun it is. Life, in the hands of the vivisectionists, is painful. I don't like pain."

"Surgeons are saying that that is what keeps our sensibilities alive to new issues."

"So you think we sleep, mentally and emotionally, w'en things are too pleasant?" There was a wicked twinkle in Mattee Sue's eyes as her fertile brain considered this method of keeping fun alive and highly sensitized.. Enlarging upon this, behind the smooth and innocent brow, she raised to him, a face, apparently so devoid of guile, that he was roused from his matter-of-fact commonsense adoration. He yearned for the gift of poesy, painting, sculpture, anything that would enable him to preserve, for posterity to worship, Innocence, as expressed in thin perfect symbol, her lovely face.

"Here comes the Major! I'm going to ask him to get up the party. No one knows how better than he. There isn't a stick or stone about this blessed old town that he doesn't know the history of, and adore! I just love the Major! He is the dearest darling! I really believe that after all these years of flitting about with a dozen sweethearts, the way lots of Southern men do, that Mrs. Lavelle has won him with her very frigidity and aloofness. It's a puzzle to Southern men,

you know, w'en a woman seems to *prefer* not to have twenty suitors about her all the time. It's *very suprising*, you know." "Oh Major," for by this time, the Major was within hailing distance, "I have a *very* great favor to ask of you. *Won't* you take us to the Locks? Not in a steam launch, but in one of those lovely sleepy boats that rocks you up there like a dear old-fashioned cradle, with a mule for a nurse? W'en I am in one of those blessed old things, I feel as if I could hug Ruskin for saying our brains would be wittier if we used tow-boats and 'all those things w'ich induce the use of hands.'"

"That is one of the strong points we psychurgists make," said Tom, a trifle didactically. "The discriminative use of fingers and hands as instruments for constructing brain cell tissues, has been found one of our most powerful allies."

"Periwinkle and persimmons!" shivered Mattee Sue, wickedly. "I hope you won't compel your wife to do the family washing to make her more companionable, mentally. That might be a *useful* way of scrubbing the color out of one's theories but not nearly so delicious as *crooning* them in sweet bits of poetry—and other heart rhapsodies—to the jog of those precious mules."

Tom's egotism became quiescent under this pretty little tongue lashing.

"It sounds very delightful," was his meek reply.

"When should you like to go?" asked the Major. "Have you any choice, Landell?"

"It must be soon," said Tom ruefully, "I sail this week."

"I'm bound for the North myself." The Major tried to speak indifferently. "A day or so's difference is nothing to me. Suppose we go on the same boat?"

"Our Locks trip must surely be to-morrow, then,"

Mattee Sue decided. "It has been so warm these last few days I think we may safely venture. Here comes Max. What do you call, Mr. Landell, that strange sense of awareness lovers possess, by w'ich they always know w'ere to find their beloved? Does psychurgy explain this phenomenon?"

"You may find answer to that at the Locks," warned the Major. "You know it is considered a stronghold of Cupid's clan. It is especially dangerous at full moon, for then their aim is unerring, their wounds fatal."

"How remarkable that I should have picked out just such a night for our party; Major, it is a pity Mrs. Lavelle went home too early in the season to permit our placing her within range. Her armor is almost impervious!"

Deftly, she caught the rose the Major threw in playful punishment for her teasing as he bade them adieu, to start, at once, upon preparations for the trip.

"Joy-bells, joy-bells,
What a truth their music tells!"

sang Tom in a mellow barytone the next morning while dressing. He had been invited to dine at the Romaines' and, as he labored with his tie, was wondering just how early he might present himself, and if, once there, it would seem too intrusive to stay out the afternoon. "'Joy-bells, joy-bells,'" he hummed again, "I wish I could recall the exact words of that dear little song. It plays about my heart constantly. The theme was woven from those few words, 'Joy-bells,' but there were two or three lines in elaboration of that thought, just as the things I am doing now are variations of the one motif, I love her, love her, love her! Isn't she a darling! Her poses, so unaf-

fectured and absolutely her own, haunt me! Her delicate little Southern 'isms enchant me! I could listen, by the hour, to her voice, with its lingering caress upon the words and the semi-elision of consonants. I wonder how soon I may decently go over there. Ah! There is a letter from Agnes!"

He opened the envelope that just then had skidded across the floor, skilfully shot under the door by the bell-boy. At once absorbed in the contents, his fine face lost its joyousness and grew in tender concern as he read.

"Dear Tom," it ran; "Can you solve the mystery! You know that for some time I have been impelled to go to Aunt Luella's. Her letters told me she was well which relieved me from any sense of duty in the matter, yet, constantly, I was urged, within myself, to doubt their written message. The feeling that she needed me, I turned aside as emotional sentimentalism in view of the dignity of my position in staying away from her and thereby quieting any gossip that I was a fortune hunter. To-day news came that she has passed the veil. Her attendant writes that she seemed well, but that day after day she had kept my picture in the bag that hangs always at her side, and night after night it has been placed tenderly under her pillow, and that often, through the night, she has held it in her arms and crooned lovingly over it. Why did they not let me know! Why did she not send for me! During the past months, her only lapse from health has been violent attacks of nausea, at not very frequent intervals, which seemed relieved in some strange way, without vomiting. The letter verifies these attacks as being synchronous with my own. Does that illustrate the thought, 'By His stripes are ye healed'?"

"Perhaps," murmured Tom, as he folded the letter, "but it seems a queer and unnecessary way of proving our connection with each other; not a valuable one, either. Dear Aunt Luella, God speed her! Heaven show Agnes a way out! To shut all such phenomena from the mind might be comparatively

easy; but to select the calls where one can serve, and deny the rest!"

As he turned the letter, he saw a postscript which he read with the puzzled look deepening in his eyes.

"The hour of dear Auntie's death," he read, "I was in my room in meditation. As I bowed my head in prayer, a vault-like well in which was an eye evolved before me. I looked at it intently, when the eye moved into another well. There it remained until I was called from its contemplation. What does Aunt Luella wish to tell me? Why may I not learn to know from spiritual discernment rather than by phenomena! Do try to see for me! Should you think it related to spiritual, mental or material matters?"

Tom pondered, but could come to no conclusion.

"At all events, give her the optimism of your assurance," he said to himself, as he went to breakfast.

Breakfast over, he wrote to his mother and sister, then walked to the florist's, selecting the prettiest flowers he could find. By that time he decided it was not too early to go to the Romaines'.

As he had hoped, he found Mattee Sue on the piazza. The apparently diligent artist was at her drawing table which, in crass contradiction to rule, was facing the south and an extended view of the street. As he approached, she seemed completely absorbed in the plates before her; but being far-sighted in more senses than one, he knew that she had been fully occupied with a scrutinizing survey of the road. Vainly she tried not to let the radiance of her heart shine through her countenance; but "one might almost say her body thought," and her joy fairly bubbled.

"Oh, Mr. Landell—let's take a drive in my dear little trap so we can go into the club grounds,—one place, thank Minerva's helmet, w're those squawking creatures of transportation—motor cars—cannot go!"

She dipped her face into the blossoms, partly to in-

hale their fragrance, partly to conceal the happiness she felt showing itself too blatantly.

"Snowball, tell Nep to bring my new trap, *instantly*. Then bring me some vases. Oh, how *perfectly beautiful* these roses are."

The trap was soon at the door. The two started off, Mattee Sue handling the reins with a skill that won Tom anew.

"What a blessing you sent that old rhetoric on such a mission as finding me?" he said, at length, shaking himself out of the sweet dream into which he had fallen, into the sweeter delight of hearing her voice.

"W—oh—w—er—y, all of us girls exchanged our old books for new ones. I think it colossal egotism, however, Mr. Landell, even in a flight of rhetorical hyperbole, to make any statement suggesting, in the most distant manner, that that book had you in its mind. Its *finding you*, was nothing more nor less than a happen—"

"There are no happens. 'There's a divinity that shapes our ends,—'"

"'Rough-hew them how we will!'" Mattee Sue completed the couplet with a tender touch of voice and eye and a sympathy of understanding that made Tom take fresh heart. Then with the adorable verve that always disclosed itself in her manner when convinced she was losing her vantage but was resolved on reinstating herself, she touched the spirited horse with a dainty flick of the whip and they went their way.

"School children don't have to buy their books in Georgia, do they?" said Tom curiously.

"Of co'se. Don't they, North?"

"No, the state provides them for use in the schools."

"We are poor! Poor! You Northerners act as if we *enjoyed* having nothing!"

"Don't say Northerners, as if we were an especially

noxious sort of beast in some isolated department of the world's menagerie."

"W'y, then, don't we have art museums and boulevards and reforms and plenty of money to pay our teachers!"

With a side glance at Tom, she saw she had scored a point, and, gleefully hugging herself, continued,

"*Please* do not come and poke your superiority into our faces. Every Yankee I *ever* met, looks at us with a commiseration that shows plainly he believes us incapable of putting on our cuff buttons, even, without assistance from them. I suspect those letters you have *forgotten to mail*, that are sticking out of your pockets, are *pitiful* attempts to transfer my *dialect* to paper. I hope it will be fully as interesting to your friends as your *brogue* is to mine!"

"I am doing no such thing," Tom hastened to assure her, funnily pathetic in his hope to hold himself high in her favor, "I would not attempt it! I wish I might, for yours is the most fascinating melody of sound I ever listened to,—with its dear little inimitable elisions and its original journeys among the intervals of the scale, weaving the most entrancing—"

"You *giggle, inside*, every time I drop my G's and H's." Mattee Sue was in no wise mollified. "You don't *know* how I have tried to tack those abominable letters w'ere they belong. I feel sure I have not dropped more than a hundred or two-oo-oo-! and I used to drop thousands! There, I saw your eye w'en I said tew!"

"I love it! Believe me! Why should I want you to say oo? There is no music in it and no taste. I assure you, my sister does not say oo! Your speech is like liquid honey or the carol of the mocking-bird in your own lagoons! I could not imitate you if I would! I have always thought attempts to reproduce dialect—"

"I haven't any more dialect than you have brogue," flashed Mattee Sue.

"I was going to say," said Tom, growing cooler as Mattee Sue warmed to the conversation, "I consider it buffoonery. Speech cannot be separated from personality. Speech,—'*Le style—c'est l'homme!*' It makes me happy that you care enough for me to feel, even for the moment, like adjusting your enunciation to please my ear."

"Certainly, you have a fine vocabulary at your command," scoffed Mattee Sue. "As for pleasing you, I am only studying *differences*. I still assert, you *all* act as if you doubt our ability! Ability, you may happen to remember, is power to perform! O Tom!"

They were driving over a high bridge at a lively trot, when, coming laboriously up the incline, a slight, nine-year old boy uncertainly wobbled his way on a bicycle. Fearfully, with hopes of avoiding them, he ran the machine into the vehicle, himself falling between the wheels, which, in an instant more would pass ruthlessly over the slender little frame.

Tom's heart stood still. He was powerless to prevent the catastrophe, for the child had fallen on Mattee Sue's side of the trap.

Without drawing in the horse—there was no time—the girl stooped toward the child. Even before his body touched ground, her arm described the splendid cycloid curve the eagle makes when he swoops upon his prey, and, catching at the collar of his blouse, she swung the little fellow on to the trap even while his pitiful, terrified, "Please don't run over me" was quivering on the air.

"Yes, ability is power to perform, you magnificent little trump!" cried Tom, in an enthusiasm of pride at the fortunate termination of a nearly heart-breaking tragedy.

"You seem to *need* a kindergarten demonstration to teach you that any of us Gustaga girls can lift a man to the clouds if we wish,—and drop him with equal facility," she concluded after an infinitesimal pause.

Tom gasped. Perhaps she meant to do that to him! She had been *so* kind and had lifted him *so* high—and it was notorious that Southern girls were skilled tacticians in heart affairs. They could slip your head into a noose and leave it there while you supposed you were being led through the gates of Paradise. What chance had he! He was only a straightforward man, desperately in love and accustomed to walking directly to his goal. Only the sincerity of his purpose and his habit of working till he got what he wanted, could withstand the subtilty of her finesse.

"Now Howard Keep, do you learn to ride that bicycle before you come spirating up this hill again," she was saying—with severity, to conceal her agitation—as the little fellow, frightened, but grateful, jumped down to his wheel, uninjured on the roadway. "And don't ride into danger, again, before you are twenty-five," she tossed after him, with an air of angelic innocence. "After that"—her eyes saw Tom as distinctly as if she were looking into his face—"you will not be a bit better able to cope with it; but you *will* seem fairer sport for fate."

At six in the evening the party started for the boat landing. As the automobiles turned into the main business street and faced the west, Tom, as never before, noted the ethereal beauty of the memorial monument poised in an atmosphere all its own, apparently unsullied and untouched by the soot and dust of lower air. It seemed a luminous manifestation rather than a

marble shaft, and the visitor's æsthetic and emotional nature was stirred to the depths.

"What grace!" he said reverently. "Its simple dignity must impel the regard, even of the thoughtless. A symbol of the ideal is ever before one who drives into the sunset from the eastern approach of this street. Back of the vista of trees at the further end," he meditated aloud to Mattee Sue, who sat beside him, "hangs the sun, like a ball of flame. The dust from the broad avenues on either side the green sward of the mall is like a rain of red gold falling to earth, to rise in fire mist. The sun sends long, lurid bars through the atmospheric glow, and illumined, poised in the white light against the background of foliage, of translucent distance and of dust flame, overlooking the city stands the soldier on this pure white shaft, never betraying his trust, watchful of the city's ideals, a suggestion that every citizen shall be the same, a type of faithfulness and honor! Somewhere, I have read a poem, The Man on the Monument!"

"Yes, it is about this very shaft." Mattee Sue's face glowed with that patriotism for her fatherland found and nurtured in almost every Southern heart.

"I do not wonder it appealed to a poet's vision! Every time I come into this street and face the sunset and see that figure limned against the sky, the blue of the heavens—truth—for his background and his ether, I shall long to put into words the power I feel transfused in me through the ideal it represents."

He saluted, as they passed.

"Here is some more golden water, as you politely called our huge mud puddle the other day, when you were entertaining fancies, more removed from the dramatic and poetic, and closer to the civil engineering chamber of your brain," and Mattee Sue, who liked, what she called heroics, only for short periods,

drew Tom's attention to the stream they were approaching. "It is not the river, this time, though, it is the canal. Pretty soon, we shall be at the landing. There is the boat waiting for us, now."

With much laughter and delicious flutters of excitement, the automobiles came to a stand, and ere long the occupants had taken possession of the commodious tow-boat with its wide-spread awnings. Rhythmically, and with the *dolce far niente* of his kind, the driver transfused into the sleepy mule an action that seemed to Tom rather an extension of stillness than a change to motion. Indeed, there was to him the drowse of the land of the Lotos-Eaters over everything, and with half shut eyes he rested in the lap of indolence. Dreamily, he felt the rope tremble and move swishingly against the sedges. Almost imperceptibly the boat obeyed the impulse and began to cut the stream with a cradle-like swing. It brushed the banks tenderly, as with gentle farewell, then swung boldly into the centre of the channel; past the mills, less like factories than like feudal castles—under the bridges, far from the black city smoke, farther and farther into nature's heart. The sun, magical alchemist, transfused life and brilliance into the muddy waters, until, sparkling and floating, swaying and dipping, clarified into a sheet of liquid gold, it mirrored strongly shadowed cloud effects and imaged the celadon green of the grasses. Slowly, at first, then with the rapid oncoming of the Southern twilight, the clouds swept the sky. Masses of black and gold, yielding to copper and bronze and sepia browns and Nile and apple greens, shimmered faintly away, until they melted into the colors and odors of the sedges as their aroma was crushed from them by the rope attached to the elbow of the drowsy man on the back of the plodding mule. As, from moment to moment, the fluttering clouds of fancy faded to the

border land of dreams, so day slipped to night; its light the moon, with satellites of stars.

Making himself one with the merriment of the party, still Tom endeavored to keep his mind in the delicious maze into which love had led it. Unimaginative, in a sense, and thoroughly practical, as he was, this mystical spell stole over him with a novelty and charm he was loth to break. With the strange flash of recollection which calls up incongruous figures to illustrate some gripping truth, he saw himself, as a boy, trying to shake the milk in a bowl without disturbing its rich coating of cream. So, now, he tried—and he laughed grimly to himself as he followed the figure—to give the joy of his companionship to the merry crowd, while holding the richness of this love dream, without jar or interruption, in his heart. Ever and anon, his half shut eyes dwelt upon the enchantress who had so completely enmeshed his emotions and led him captive, while, in the intervals, with eyes wide open and intellectual, he parried the banter of those about him and gave his Roland for every Oliver with a charm that made him the lion of the occasion.

After three hours, the boat edged its way heavily to shore, and the party landed at the Locks. The moon, poised above the massive masonry and natural crags, silvered the turbulent waters as they seethed against the background of rock and cedrine hills. It was a scene, indescribable, never to be forgotten—this majesty of nature—silent, even in the thundering water, the sighing trees, the life, immanent, of the motionless yet vibrant rocks.

In a moment, the boat was emptied of its human freight; a bugle crashed into the conclaves of the pines; fiddle and trombone stirred waves of sound in the symphony of night. Echoes heralded the melody, playing with ever-changing variations upon the theme

of life. Scouting groups tested the pavilion floor, circling discreetly away from chaperones in well-planned, lengthening curves.

After a few turns, Tom drew Mattee Sue outside the pavilion, and together they reached a jutting of masonry. Time was leaping with long and hateful strides toward the hour of his departure, and he grudged every minute of trivial converse with others when he longed to send his soul further toward the realization of his quest. From the massive bulwark of stone they looked upon the rampant, turbulent waters, which, strong in comradeship with lovers, expressed, in songs without words, a willingness to enfold in their noisy surging the voices of the man and maid. Beyond the ledges of gaunt and naked crags were the serenely flowing waters of the canal.

Encouraged by the immensity on every side, their voices rose upon the night zephyr and were lost in the rustling of the dead oak leaves restively moving upon the stems that had held them all too long. In rests, staccatos, silences and exclamations, their souls moved to the accompaniment of the seething mass below, as, in swirling rhythmic nocturne, it played the dreamy mystery of the Southern night, an impelling accompaniment to the intermittent melody of their speech, as love pulsed in and about them as strong as life itself.

At times throughout the afternoon, Tom had felt inundated with a depression wholly alien to his temperament. It had seized upon him after Mattee Sue's insinuation that ability implies a latent power of annihilating men. Alternating with attacks of merriment and blissful introspection, he had been the prey of moods, an unheard of thing with him. As for Mattee Sue, she was in a delicious tremor of excitement. Even as she had seen Howard Keep wobble

his uncertain way toward the inevitable, she had known Tom's capitulation imminent. She knew, too, that she could, with equal ease, raise him to the heights, or leave him to disappointment.

"You know why I am here," his voice sang into her heart. "You know why I am a thousand miles from home beneath a Southern sky."

"To study types, I suppose," was Mattee Sue's succinct reply. "To learn w'y we are so poor we can't buy schoolbooks!"

"I am too desperately in love to be tormented! I can't stand it! Be as good to me as you were to little Howard Keep. Do not leave me writhing between the wheels of your wit and sarcasm!"

As was her custom in affairs of coquetry, when, as the Major said, she was preparing to hang hearts on her scalp belt, her lips opened to parry his suit; but one look at his face melted her mood. His earnestness and simplicity proved a more virile power than any art of fencing. Her head drooped. She turned her face aside, but listened.

"Life has such wonderful experiences for us both," Tom went on, earnestly, "let us find them together."

Mattee Sue stood silhouetted in the moonlight. Her shadow stirred as she quivered with the wonder of a new-found tenderness.

"You do love me! You do believe in me! My rhetoric queen!" His heart joined its throbs, almost audibly, with the sound of pine and wave. He noted her attitude of listening, and urged his suit.

Unconsciously, she swayed toward him, her chin leading the beautiful bended head, until the fair face, luminous with emotion, was raised slowly upward and her eyes met his. The two seemed lifted up and drawn together. A sense of perfect safety and rest, enfolded her. In this man were to be found those "high erected

thoughts, deep seated in the heart of courtesy," of which she long had dreamed; deep, stirring, true, real, restful, and *safe*—the courtesy in which a woman could abide and *know* to be love. She gave a happy little sigh.

"I believe in you—and love you!"

"Do you always bring your plans to such rapid culmination?" said Mr. Romaine the next day after dinner.

"Rapid, Mr. Romaine!" protested Tom. "It's been over two years!"

"That sounds like an eternity, as you intone it! You do not expect to take my daughter away with you, I hope?"

"There is nothing I should like better; but I suppose I must give you a few months to get used to the parting. I shall endeavor to express in my attitude toward your daughter, as my wife, her right as an individual, wife and mother, and to make our lives a union of love and of understanding."

"God bless a lover like yourself," Mr. Romaine covered his emotion under the careful selection of a cigar, "and bring you both to the fulness of your high desire."

CHAPTER XXIV.

"A truth that the heart acknowledges last of all, that even if we poured out our own blood in streams for any one, we could not, thereby, give him a drop of richer or more noble blood than is found in his own heart."

THE platform was filled with friends of Tom and the Major bidding them good-bye. The reason for the latter's trip North seemed as clearly defined in the minds of the merry group, as was the coming of Tom South. Amidst laughter, waving of handkerchiefs and hats, the train moved slowly away, gradually increasing its speed until out of sight and the two settled down for a season of congenial companionship. The Major whiled away the hours with lively bits of history concerning the country through which they traveled, its past, present and future, the business prospects, new industries, towns springing up by the way, with now and then a war story, as a passing scene or old plantation recalled to mind one of many "before the war" legends.

They reached the port city, and soon were at the wharf and on the steamer, Tom enthusiastically watching the loading of the boat with its cotton freight, and the Major, to whom that scene was familiar, equally interested in watching Tom.

"Yes," he responded, in answer to a question, "that fellow who sets the pace, gets extra wages for the noise he is making."

"See them hustle to get in these last bales," called Tom, as excited as a lad.

"Look, yonder go the hatches. The next thing of interest will be the swearing. Of all extensive, expansive *cussers* Captain Crossleigh is the most expansive. I hope we shall have a good trip." The Major settled himself to watching the casting off of the lines and the sliding away from the wharf into the channel and down to the sea.

The river lay like the broad sheet of gold of ancient poetry as the boat steamed slowly down to the bar. The rice fields, with their wonderful greens, than which, among all of nature's, there is none more delicate; the foreign shipping in the harbor; the many matters which awakened interest on a new trip, kept Tom on the alert.

"I recall coming up here one night in the late fall." The Major moved his steamer chair a little closer to the gunwale. "We worked our way at a snail's pace through the crowded harbor. It was moonlight and cold. The scows about us were covered with sail cloths and the hoar frost encrusted them, sparkling and glistening in the moonlight. They looked like huge corpses laid out on mighty biers. I assure you, it was weird."

"'Full many a shape that shadows were,'" quoted Tom, thoughtfully. "I wonder how the Ancient Mariner felt when he saw them floating all about him."

"I know how I felt! I realized, as never before, how truly we are ghosts—ephemeral shapes of an idea. After all, we are like those scows, filled with sail-covered actualities. When conditions favor, we may throw aside these shrouds we are pleased to call the all-powerful body, and display what we are inwardly. I have not, for a great while, had in mind the poem you quote, but now there comes to me the stanza following that one—lines, descriptive of the moment when the life within the seeming dead reveals itself,—

“‘Each corse lay flat,—lifeless and flat,
And by the holy rood,
A man all light, a seraph man,
On every corse there stood.’”

“Watch! We are nearing the mouth of the river. Note the difference in the color at the bar and beyond. At once, the golden mass becomes a tossing, billowing, foam-capped silver sheet, extending as far as the eye can see. Isn't that a pretty good illustration of the effect of influence in the making of humanity?”

“Tom Landell!” A voice that conveyed but a dim sense of recognition to Tom's ears made itself heard at his elbow. “Let me see! Have I met you since my marriage with Jack Jenkins? Oh, of course! Everybody thought I was going to be Mrs. Horace Vernon, you know—what an escape! I'd introduce Jack but unfortunately he's down with rheumatism, poor fellow. He is a thorough man of the world—a nice man—he could give you lots of dots,—”

Her face clouded a little but she rambled on.

“I forgot. You know Jack already. He's got all of your Aunt Luella's money—maybe you don't know, if you've been away long. She left no near heirs and made the will in his favor at the last minute. It was a great tribute to her confidence in him, and it affected him very much. Her death quite broke him up and he was obliged to have a change, so we took this trip to get the sea, and turned right round and came back,—”

“May I introduce my friend, Major Verness?” While Grace stopped to take breath, Tom seized the opportunity to present his companion.

Grace gave an almost imperceptible nod, and began again,—

“Where did you come from, Tom?”

“Gustaga. We—”

"Oh, did you! Mr. Jenkins and I were going there; but he had a dreadful attack, poor fellow, and we didn't get so far. He suffers terribly with rheumatism. Do you ever see Horace Vernon, nowadays? He was a nice man—" Her eyes clouded again, but she went on, "So glad to know you, Major Verness. Jack will like to meet you, I'm sure. I'll see you at dinner."

She went to her husband's stateroom and tapped. A sodden voice bade her enter and, when the door opened, no explanation was necessary as to the sort of rheumatism from which Jack Jenkins suffered. Escaping, in an agony of disgust, she went to an adjoining stateroom and threw herself upon the bed in a tempest of tears.

"A man of the world!" she sobbed. "God, can't you hear me! Tell me what to do!"

She went to dinner that night, radiantly pretty, her eyes gleaming with the mysterious and fascinating splendor that only tears can give. No belladonna, no kohl, no secrets of the boudoir bestow such mystery of charm to eyes as tears shed by a broken heart, but conquered, mellowed, and steeped in smiles.

She had wheedled the purser into placing her at table near the two men she knew and kept the ball of conversation tossing lightly in her usual flippant manner. At the close of the meal, smiling coquettishly, she left them and went to her stateroom. As before, she threw herself upon the bed, this time, sobbing, "Horace, Horace, what have I done!"

"See here, Tom," said the Major, as the sound of rain beating against the porthole woke the two men, "do you know we are cutting through this water like scudding clouds! I never was on a boat going at such speed! By the way, is that Mrs. Jenkins a special friend of yours?"

"No—she lived near my aunt, and my sister knew her, and has always kept up with her. I can't imagine why, unless it's because she adores being in at the awakening process. She is a sort of godmother of souls—is my sister."

"Her *husband's rheumatism, poor fellow*, gets on my nerves. I imagine it does on hers, too. This boat is going like a house afire. Suppose we reconnoitre."

"Don't you think it's all right?"

"I reckon so; but there is no harm in our looking about and seeing what we can see."

The men prepared, hastily, to go on deck. As the Major opened the stateroom door, he halted an instant, threw up his head, then walked on rapidly, Tom following closely, scenting danger.

The captain had just come from the hurricane deck and was standing at the prow looking over the wide expanse of ocean looming in the darkness. The boat was plunging ahead, cutting the water with a hissing sound and leaving behind a broad, light green, foamy wake. The captain turned and greeted them.

"A gallant sailor," said the Major, as the boat throbbed under him.

"Yes, sir, a craft to be proud of."

"Well freighted with cotton?"

"To the very hatches."

The Major stepped closer and spoke in an undertone.

The captain's chin shot out and his eyes almost closed, while, between their lids, there flamed the steady light of courage and determination.

"How did you know! For God's sake, keep it secret. I have three hundred souls on board."

"Not to know that smell! There's nothing like it!"

"Like what?" Tom questioned.

"The cotton is on fire," was the Major's low re-

sponse. "Captain, at this rate, what is the earliest we can hope to land?"

"Thirty hours," his firm jaw set more firmly still.

He returned to the hurricane deck and did not leave it for some time, while the great search-light swept the dark spaces and his eyes were strained to see land—land!

When Grace appeared at the breakfast table, as pretty as ever, no one would have dreamed that all night long she had lain awake feasting on the bitter fruit of repentance, with the eye of a good sailor, watching the horizon line appear and disappear as the ship bowed and bounded over the waves.

"Good morning!" she said briskly. "How finely we are driving along. Jack is not coming to breakfast. He has rheumatism so badly, poor fellow."

"How much easier to call it sick,—and not half so irritating, if she really wants to lie," thought the Major. "Evidently she has adopted that phrase and holds to it, irrespective of fitness. Adjustability takes brain, I suppose!"

"Do you carry all your beautiful jewels about with you?" as, later, they were standing at the prow, the two men serious with the burden of their terrible secret and Grace making valiant attempts to coquette with them as she played with her handsome rings.

"Oh, I leave them about anywhere. There are a lot in my stateroom, now."

"If you won't mind my suggesting it, I would secrete your valuables upon your person. There are often sneak thieves on boats."

Thrown into a flutter of excitement, Grace hurried to her stateroom to follow the Major's advice, just as Captain Crossleigh appeared, cool, suave, and smiling.

"Major," he concealed the gravity of his words behind a jovial laugh that could be heard by the by-

standers when the words could not, "I shall burst the boilers! Don't look concerned or the others will suspect. Laugh, for God's sake, laugh!"

The two obeyed, and the echo of the sound haunted them for many and many a day.

"I have followed your advice," Grace told them on her return. "Jack wanted to know what I was doing; but he was in such pain he didn't notice especially. Do you mind if I stay about with you, Tom?" a shadow of wistfulness in her tones, "I like you for your sister's sake. She is the only one in the world who doesn't treat me as if I were a never-to-be-anything-else-flibbertigibbet—except one—and he didn't hold out." She broke off suddenly. "Mercy!" returning to her usual manner. "Isn't this boat cutting the water! I don't consider it safe! Do you, Major Verness? It makes me nervous! Did you speak to the captain about it? I saw him leave you just as I came on deck."

"Pretty fast craft, this, stranger," remarked a bystander. "Don't you call it pesky risky traveling?"

"So much the better!" laughed the Major. "The sooner to home and sweetheart."

"Why is this boat plunging along like a mad thing?" a bright little woman addressed him in low tones. "Don't utter platitudes to me, I beg," checking the jovial answer, "I know the odor! There is nothing like it!"

"Only the majesty of calmness will bear us through," the Major returned, under his breath.

"I saw the burning of a boat off Apple Island—" she shuddered, moving closer, as they stood by the gunwale, oblivious that the waves at times dashed over the railing upon them—"the captain ran for the old wharf at Shirley Gut, and, as the fiery mass cut through the waves, the people jumped for their lives. The

steward's wife was swept under the wheel and ground to death! I saw her go!"—She trembled.—"Under the wheel, and I saw her go!"

"It is best not to dwell on that now. We shall not go beneath the wheel but on to the fair green land to live and love,— " The Major was interrupted by Grace, who came hurrying to them.

"Major!" she called, with the wild inconsequence of fright, "I'm going to tell the captain I'll not stay on this boat if he doesn't slow down. This pace is scandalous!"

On lunged the steamer, now in uneven leaps like a horse wearying in the race. Stealing out of the blue gray of the horizon peeped the outlines of land, to disappear, again, as the tossing surf and clouding mists concealed them. Louder and louder grew the denunciations of the passengers as the captain failed to respond to their demands and the steamer madly sped on!

"He will burst the boilers!" said one.

"He is drunk!" said another.

"He shall be reported!" said a third.

Then came the inevitable.

"I smell smoke! My God, the boat is afire!" The company became a frantic mob, a seething mass of unrestrained humanity as wild and relentless as the fire and water they so madly feared.

Underneath the hideous obligato of curses, screams and groans, above the double bass of the ocean's relentless roar, sounded the steady pumping of the engines, their motif translated to the ears of terror that now heard it, as an herculean struggle for life.

After a few moments, the captain held them together with the baton of his will, swaying these undisciplined or unleashed minds to the theme of his own, which was, safety, through calm. Quietly, he told them how, unknown to them, with hatches down, keeping the

flames in check, he had been racing for land through many hours.

Grace had run to Jenkins' stateroom, where he lay in the throes of his debauch.

"Get up, Jack, and go on deck with me," she pleaded.

"Rheumatism too bad, Gracie." He stirred feebly, then settled back.

"Come, Jack!" she insisted.

"I can't!"

"You shall, Jack! Come!"

She took his arm and tried to draw him to his feet.

"Leave me 'lone!" he snarled, then, apologetically, "'Scuse me, Gracie, rheumatism too bad, dear!"

Frenzied, she flew back to Tom.

"I can't make Jack come up on deck! It's his rheumatism, poor fellow!"

The moments were passing. The insistent, pungent odor of the burning cotton grew more apparent. The pumps were strained to the utmost—one was already disabled, but still in use. The sails were spread; the great funnels belched forth dense volumes of smoke; and the captain, on the hurricane deck, looked over the seething spume of waters—to life?—or death?

Tom and the Major had gone to Jenkins' stateroom.

Words failed to rouse the man to action, and, together they dragged him to the gunwale, where the ship's load, awaiting the captain's orders, were so grouped as to prevent the careening of the vessel.

Then through every stateroom and salon came the call of the stewards.

"On deck! On deck!"

Each went to his appointed place in the boats. There was no halt until it came to Grace.

"I shall wait for my husband," she declared.

She had her way and the other women surged into

the life-boats, leaving her with the men whispering over and over to herself,

"If I die, Horace Vernon, I'll die true to the little good you saw in me, and loved!"

"Ready!" called the mate to her. "We'll send your husband after you."

Grace responded to the summons. Her husband was bestowed safely in the bottom of the boat. Tom and the Major were about to follow, when, with an uncertain lurch, Jack Jenkins struggled to his feet, and pitched, headlong, overboard.

"Jump for your lives," shouted the mate. "The fire is coming through!"

The two men sprang surely into the boat just as a snaky tongue of flame licked its way through the deck where they had stood.

Meanwhile, Jack Jenkins had floated upon an outgoing wave toward a grave in the abysmal waters. Motionless, in his maudlin state, he lay on its crest. As Tom and the Major landed in the centre of the boat, the ceaseless undulation of the mighty ocean rolled the billow, with its living freight, in their direction. The boat, tossing and dipping, careened toward the approaching raft fashioned not by mortal hands, wafting back to safety this plaything of destiny. With a sturdy twist of the arm, a sailor caught the almost inert mass and flung it, drenched, but otherwise unhurt, into the bottom of the craft. Then the boat pushed off, and swept toward shore, with scorching flames bursting forth behind it, in glorious and horrible brilliance.

With the mutual errand of greeting the travelers, Agnes and Mrs. Lavelle had met upon the wharf. Hand tightly grasped in hand, together they watched the awful display, as mass after mass of blazing flakes shot into the air and dropped hissing in the sea. After

moments which seemed a lifetime they discerned tiny specks detaching themselves from the pall that lay dense upon the horizon, and soon they distinguished these as heavily-laden boats. Revenue cutters, as close as they dared venture, were waiting to render aid. As Agnes stood, every nerve strained, a sense of peace stole in upon her consciousness, releasing the tension of her fear and impressing her with the tenderness and protection of its ministry. With her realization of its unfoldment, vision seemed extended beyond the opaqueness and the struggling of the present. Memory held before her the picture of months ago—Tom, unafraid, coming, unscathed, from clouds of smoke and flame. She turned to Mrs. Lavelle.

“Do not fear.” All her terror gone, she transmitted her assurance to her friend. “There is no danger for our loved ones.”

As she spoke, great columns of flame shot skyward from the nebulous mass, and with a series of detonations, stunning, even across the great expanse, the steamer plunged beneath the wave, and only a swirl of waters bubbled where a proud ship had queened it o’er the deep.

CHAPTER XXV.

"One ought neither to laugh, nor weep at, exalt, nor curse a human being's actions; but only try to understand them."

Ellen Key.

ABOUT a month after Tom's return from his Southern trip, Agnes was sitting with her mother in the large upper hall overlooking the avenue leading from the road, when she saw him coming toward the house driving handsome Guy, the mate to the lamented Prince. A figure beside him attracted her curiosity and she stepped to the oriel, which was open, and watched them until under the porte cochère. A moment later, she and her mother appeared at the entrance to greet the newcomers.

The figure Agnes had seen sitting beside Tom was a wisp of humanity, perhaps about twelve, though the wizened face and frail physique afforded no accurate register of age. The shape of his head was concealed by a shock of hair, no two strands of which seemed inclined to lie in the same direction. The eyes were frightened, the skin was sallow. More than that one could not see, for the child was almost hidden behind a violin he was hugging to his bosom.

Tom was standing by the trap, urging the little fellow to descend.

"Hop out, Hi-Timmy Tidmouse," he was saying, "I will help you."

The boy met Tom's offer with a scowl and, for reply, clutched his instrument the tighter.

"Very well, clamber along by yourself, if you prefer. Surely, you don't think I would touch your precious fiddle, do you?"

Without a word, the boy turned, balanced his treasure on the floor of the cart, backed away from it and stood, presently, upon the gravel; then, after laboriously climbing to the top step, he sat down and laid the violin across his knee, his every movement betraying distrust and fear.

"Timmy Tidmouse has come to see our musical instruments," Tom turned to his mother and sister as they stood in the hall, beautiful enough, both of them, to attract the attention of the most inattentive little waif. "I must introduce him properly, mustn't I! Hi-Timmy Tidmouse is my chum name for Alexander Steny, a great friend of Dr. Wehr's and mine."

The boy ignored this good-natured attempt to make him feel at ease. Not the quiver of an eyelash betrayed that he heard.

"Won't you speak to my mother and sister? Well, next time! What do you say to something to eat? Shall he go in with us, mother? Come on, Hi-Timmy," adding, inconsiderately, "It is part of a plan for awakening latent centres and building new tissues—in short, for unfolding mind to the point of demonstrating moral qualities. These, in turn, will become incorporate expressions, through finer bodies."

"Some cells you consider latent may be more awake than you realize," said Mrs. Landell, meaningly. "Yes, come in to luncheon, Hi-Timmy. It has been announced."

The boy did not move until Tom started into the house; then he followed, slowly. As a few minutes later they all entered the dining-room, he still clutched his violin.

"Shall we put your pet here by the wall?" Tom

made a move to take Hi-Timmy's instrument; but the child only grasped it more tightly. "It must be taken care of while you are eating. You can't hold your knife and fork and that big thing."

This remark impelled attention. A glimmer of intelligence flickered in his eyes. He seemed to be puzzling the matter out. Finally, he transferred the precious violin to one hand, while, with the other, he assisted himself to a chair. Sitting sideways, he bestowed the object of his affection between his knees, gripping it with a rigidity that stiffened his emaciated little body.

Tom said nothing. He drew a ball of twine from his pocket. Hi-Timmy espied it and, reaching forward, took it from Tom's unresisting hand. Then the dazed look again came over the tired little face.

"You use your knife and fork so beautifully," encouraged Tom. "There are *such* good things to eat."

Hi-Timmy looked at the cord, then at the violin. He left the chair and put the treasure upon it. He saw, at once, this would not do. At the same time, he raised his head, and his dilating nostrils inhaled the odor of the coming meal. Hunger acted as impetus to invention. He walked behind the chair, and, balancing his violin against it, tied it to the leg. Looping the string, he put it over his head, clambered carefully on to the chair, then said, dully,

"I'm hungry. Gimme something to eat."

He used his soup spoon surprisingly well, and the bowing of his knife and fork was good for so uncouth a lad. It could well be called bowing, for the use of the arms and the muscles beneath the shoulder blades, trained by his study of the violin, were full of a growing grace seeming to belong to a different evolution from that of the rest of the boy.

No one disturbed him as he ate greedily. Tom

longed to extend his explanation of the plan for the boy's unfoldment by the building of brain tissue through the use of the hands and the developing of the sound centres, and to point out to his mother that, already, the method of procedure had changed the shape of the child's head in the motion and music areas; but he contented himself with formulating statements, for her further enlightenment, concerning this child whom Dr. Wehr, with infinite tenderness and care, was mind-building into a man.

"Now, let us see the instruments," said Mrs. Landell, as, luncheon over, she led the way to the music room.

There were two pianos, a guitar, a mandolin, a 'cello and a violin. Hi-Timmy knew what they were, for he had seen such before. He went up to each and touched it gently. As he was doing this, a low sweet sound echoed in quivering cadence on the air. Then came a harmony of response like the summer wind whispering in some mountain canyon; like the distant murmur of a waterfall; like notes of melody floating in woodland depths; the one answering call of a mocking-bird among deep and lustrous foliage beneath which are soft green rushes and the sheen of still waters; a sound like the moaning of winds across the hilltops when the storm is near; a cry, as of some imprisoned soul, moaning, pitifully, to be set free from the bondage of isolation and desolation and linked with the heart of humanity. It seemed as if the great spirit within the sound were reaching out to all created things, holding everything in its embrace; quivering with their sorrows; radiating with their joys; and gathering all to its great soul.

The boy stood motionless. It was music, he knew. Music! His heart told him that! His every nerve and sinew were alive and trembling with the wonder

of it. Whence came it! Never had he heard its like before! Often, his violin had cried to him, as if trying to catch and fix the shadowy dreams of his imagination or memory; but this reverberated through his being; swept in waves of sound from head to feet, and woke still valleys of the soul that never would be silent or wholly in shadow again; spoke to something inside him and made him long to live and *be*.

"Where is it?" he whispered. He looked about him wildly, passionately.

Agnes was playing on a harp. Her delicate draperies fell gracefully about the golden base; her supple fingers summoned magical harmonies through her love for the thought those vibrant strings conveyed to her welcoming ear. Pausing an instant, he sped across the room, threw his arms about the instrument and fell sobbing at her feet.

After a while, his weeping ceased. He raised his head.

"Make the music come again, lady," he pleaded, with bated breath, "make the music come again."

She began again, and the air about him seemed to dance with melody, the being of him to sway with sound.

She took him to the organ and let him feel the keys lift to the wind of the great pipes; showed him how to pull out the stops and make the instrument tremble as he trod the pedals to suit his fancy—now making a fierce jumble of sound, like the noise of many waters; now daintily picking out a key and listening to its message. She let him feel the rush of wind upon his hand as she put on the swell, and startled him a little when the *vox humana* spoke from out this massive box of mysteries.

Next she took him to one of the pianos—a Steinway—and showed him the wonderful arrangement of the

strings, told him to follow with his heart, the sound they made as she caressed the keys with skillful and loving fingers; bade him hear each tone as it leapt to its third, its fifth, its seventh, the singing overtone gathering all and moving on and out into the sunshine of the clear, crisp air. His hands reached forward to act—to do their part in helping make brain tissue over which the awakened self soon would recognize constructive power. The lethargy lifted from his face. For the time, at least, he seemed to feel himself a living soul.

“Let us go into the garden,” said Tom. “I want to show you some things I keep out there. Will you take your violin or leave it here?”

“I’ll leave it.” He waved his hand toward the instruments, in whose spirit of comradeship, courage, and understanding, he had come to trust.

They reached the summer house through gardens of sweet flowers. Tom showed the manikins, of which he was so proud, and the skeletons, of which, at first Hi-Timmy was very shy. After a while, the boy was persuaded, though gingerly, to touch a skull.

Tom opened the head of one of the manikins and showed the little fellow the brain, and told him a bit about the wonders of its unfoldment.

“You saw the keyboard of the piano?” he questioned. When Hi-Timmy nodded affirmatively, Tom showed him, first by the manikin, and then by means of pictures, the location of the wonderful sounding-board within the human body, watching to see if the mind remained awake. It did. It was taking in, as never before, what he was saying.

“Here, Hi-Timmy, only four thousand times smaller than this picture shows it to be, at what is called the middle ear, is a piano-forte keyboard. Here are both the long and the short keys. This keyboard floats on

a little lake we call nerve fluid—that is something that flows, you know. Listen.”

He repeated slowly,

“ ‘This tiny bit of mechanism represents the mind’s registry and use of the tonality of the scale.’ That is too much for you to understand, now; but remember this:—You have music in your soul and you are the one to make it speak and do good to the world, as it has done you good this afternoon. You can send any strain of thought singing through you, until we can see as well as hear what you are thinking. ‘To paint a picture well is to paint it according to the waves of sound. Unless it can be transposed from color into music, it has not the essentials of true art.’ Let this mean to you, that everything you learn you can put to use in many ways, and make many persons happy.”

Hi-Timmy smiled as if the depths of him had come into direct comprehension of what Tom meant, if not of what he said. It was the first real heartfelt smile Tom had seen upon the boy’s face during four years of casual acquaintance, and a year or more intimate knowledge of him in Dr. Wehr’s school for the up-building of children’s bodies through mind.

“I wish the doctor had seen that awakening of the soul’s expression,” Tom said to his mother and sister after his return from taking the child back to Dr. Wehr. “The blessed man has been five years coaxing that puny seed to grow. Its roots must be strong, so I am hoping that, from now on, its normal growth will be what, to the uninitiated, may seem phenomenal.”

“Tell us about the little fellow?” questioned his mother.

“When the doctor first became interested in him, he seemed hopelessly wrecked by a series of terrible shocks. He was a travesty of what he is to-day—bred in stark, poisoning fear. We tried to stimulate his

feeble circulation, not with drugs but with joy—or, at least, interest. We found no response, and began to question if there were any joy cells to waken. One day, a violin in the room where the boy was, fell to the floor. The whirring strings, spurred to motion by the fall, seemed to stir a corresponding motion within him. The doctor saw it. It gave him a clue for action. He provided Hi-Timmy with the most comprehending teacher he could find, and the results have been illuminating, not in the lines of musicianship but in coördinating the boy within himself.”

“It is plain he adores his instrument,” said Agnes. “After the exhibition at the lunch table I was surprised that he allowed it out of his sight.”

“Yes, he loves his violin. He has feared constantly for its safety since some boys teased him by trying to steal it. This afternoon, his idea of external relationships seems to have become more definite than ever before. Now, through normal means, we shall work to introduce a consciousness of coördination of, as well as coöperation with, each truth as he perceives it.”

“That is no easy task with the average child,” said Mrs. Landell, thoughtfully. “But with such an one—perhaps easier, after all, than with one bound by tradition. Bring the little fellow here as often as you please.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

*"Thou smilest at the child that crieth for his toys,
Are they less toys, old man, which cause thy
griefs and joys?"*

The Cherubic Pilgrim.

THE quality of the groups that came from the chaste little temple on the hill was distinctly finer, even in the not-so-many months intervening between this evening and the one when Agnes' heart was so disturbed by her sense of discoördination. There was a virility in their step, a ring in the voice and a directness in the eye and the bearing that spoke well for the acceptance of the truths Dr. Wehr came week after week to teach. Philip Herman lived in the holy attitude of expressing, despite the miasma that his mind, again and anon, would draw from the swamp lands of discouragement and disaster, to inhibit his vision and cloak him with its clammy chill. One by one, some recluse who hitherto had tried in vain to strike a consonant chord with his fellows through the organized religious bodies of the town crept forth to join his melody of redemption with that of the redeemed souls whose call was, 'Onward Sons of Morning.' Mind joined with mind, without distinction of rank. The educated were finding in the original deductions of the uneducated the salt that gave savor to the food of their minds and warmed the chill of the learning that smelt only of tomes in academic libraries. The uneducated were learning from breathing human mortals the warmth and life of culture, and the idea of coöperation was rising in their midst, upon which was to be born a new

generation of nobility and intrinsic worth, material, mental and spiritually moral.

Mrs. Bryce and Mrs. Burton had left the lecture room a little in advance of Agnes; but waited outside for the word they always loved to have with her.

"I am just obliged to get light on what Dr. Wehr said about transmuting ideas into ideals," said Mrs. Bryce. "I know Agnes can help me. I want to be ready for John to-night. He said that a man on the train asked him if the church was turning into a sanatorium to save its skin."

"I didn't understand about this mixing of health and religion, myself, at first," returned Mrs. Burton, "I do now, though. You can't separate them if you understand their meaning right—that is, if health means wholeness in all states of consciousness."

By this time the Landells and Dr. Wehr, with Marian Fosby, John McBarr and Philip Herman had joined them. They strolled along in the free and easy manner of suburbanites.

"Come here, Tom," said Mrs. Burton in an aside. "Explain things to us. Dr. Wehr was clear enough, but it takes time to digest it all."

"Or recognition," responded Tom. "Did you ever think of that? Not time, but recognition! What is it you want to unravel?"

"He said that what is called flesh and blood are really phases of qualities or spiritual attributes. I didn't believe this at first. I do now. I see it verified daily."

"You see you don't need me to explain."

"Well, then, see if you think I *do* understand. The next point I took in—partially, anyway—was that law is the statement of the processes of discovering; uncovering, placing in new lights; building, upon old findings, new interpretations of action, according to the

different states of consciousness with which the mind views them. The reality of law exists in its expression through our lives, not in making it an axiom, only." Mrs. Bryce was a thinker, though, according to academic traditions, not what is generally called educated. "But right here," she continued, "I did not get at his method of making it a living expression instead of axiomatic."

"You understand, do you not, that discriminative action of mind wakens functions of brain and makes more alert those already in use? As we coördinate this brain action, not in philosophizing or dreaming abstractly, but in *living the life*, we find mind, body and spirit expressing our thoughts in harmony with each other as well as with the active thought of others. We find the world larger than we thought, or, as St. Paul says, 'I am not in my flesh, my flesh is in me.' That is, our consciousness unfolds to us the possibilities of our souls,—Dr. Wehr, come talk to these intelligent listeners of yours." Tom gave way to the lecturer and fell behind.

"We all want to see into the universe, instead of living on the surface of 'a daily grind,' said Dr. Wehr companionably. "We want to glorify daily events with the light of understanding, as we wait for the sun to show us the dust in unswept rooms or to help us find the weeds about the roots of our cherished plants. There are so many figures of speech to be used in explanation, that I may mix metaphors. To me, the opening up of consciousness—which is a state of knowing—is like entering room after room of a house filled with treasures."

"That is a splendid way of explaining to us house-keepers," said Mrs. Bryce, happily.

"Some scientists speak of the functions of the body and of functioning qualities in certain parts thereof.

As consciousness extends, they learn that qualities are functioned in our beings and, finally, that they function in Being. One state of consciousness recognizes us as physical organisms made of tissues and of cells; another state of consciousness perceives that these tissues and cells are really qualities formed of our past discriminative actions, transformed by the renewing of the mind. This is true transmutation. We learn that physical sight sees nothing nor is the physical brain more than the substance such as one buys from the butcher for the breakfast table."

"That explains the term—continuity of life—to me," said Marian thoughtfully.

"So it does to me. To some states of consciousness, body is matter only, a strange rending called death tearing us from all we are and were and plunging us into what may or may not be. To other states, we are thought, plastic, not static, always responding to the moving forces of life, not as a mass, but according to the inherent choice of every part, moving at different rates of aspiration and unfolding consciousness at different periods of what we call time. The soul never is separated from an embodiment which is the manifest gauge of what it embodies. There was no mystery in Jesus' death. There was no death. The soldiers could not find the body, not because it had been spirited away by friends; not because He was a deceiver. It was because He expressed a complete unifying with Universal Consciousness, and the rate and quality of aspiration throughout His being were synchronous. With this understanding of life, the noble love of one state of consciousness becomes the noble life of the succeeding one."

"I don't see how to realize this consciously," said Marian.

"*Know* that creative energy manifests in us and

through us. Teach it that it is functioned within us, not for the generation of children alone, but for achievement in the arts and sciences and noble deeds. Then, Christians no longer will go about with wings spread but too devitalized to fly. We shall express life in finer quality for ourselves and for the coming race beings akin to gods. As in physical unfoldment, we have passed the seeming immobility of the protoplasm and are conscious of our flowing blood, so we shall learn that we are beyond the blood and lymph stage, transcending what physical sight can see, and are, in reality, children of light. What, in one stage of our enlightenment, spells materialism, in another is etherealism, and in another spiritualization."

"How much clearer and all-compensating that makes God," said Marian. "I wish I knew the processes."

"Will this aid you? Sit at ease. Know that you are one with the Infinite All. Think no more of your embodiment than when you are connected with Central at the telephone. At first you may find difficulty in doing this; perseverance, tranquillity and coöperation accomplish both. Decide on the message you wish to transmit, nor permit your intelligence to be lulled, either by persons or conditions. Consciously choose something worth perpetuating and vitalize it with desire. Speak to creative energy; demand that it give you executive ability to perform; to the love energy that it vitalize you with divine purity on all planes of consciousness; to individuality that it rise and shine with the light of good tidings. This glorifies our meaning of the phrase, 'I have done it,'—it does not mean yourself as a whole but as part of a perfect whole. With thought thus consciously and definitely directed, there are transmitted into expression cell-building

powers of health and blessedness," concluded the Doctor.

"That is worth hearing," said Mrs. Burton to Mrs. Bryce, as the two parted with the others and went their way. "It is beautiful that God is our mind. It makes me feel like running like a hart without fainting. I quote the Bible more than I used to. It means something to me now. Lots of it used to seem like nonsense."

"I enjoy going to church nowadays," said Mrs. Bryce, "I get something for every day's living."

"I like to hear Tom Landell and Dr. Wehr talk when they come to see little Alexander Steny. He is boarding with me to get domesticated, so to speak. I heard the Doctor tell Tom that to try to make suggestions to brain cells that haven't been constructed tends to form clots on the brain," Mrs. Burton continued. "You have to wake up, mentally, and work out consciously and discriminately in some sort of action, if you want to build brain cells. Do you know, they are training this child, part of the time, as if he were blind!"

"What's that for?"

"They claim that his growth has been by leaps and bounds since he has had to use the motive vision back of sight without the aid of the eyes. I believe it, too, for I have a little nephew in the school for the blind, who in seven months learned to read with a comprehension I haven't seen equalled. They blindfold Alexander, and he walks and acts with what the Doctor calls his true vision. As for his reasoning—in six weeks he learned to walk and find his way without fumbling. There is a wonderful difference in him every way, though he is a wild sort of thing.—Good heavens, what is he up to—just as I'm telling you how he's improved!"

A prolonged wail came from her house as they approached.

"What is it, indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Bryce.

"Alexander Steny at his violin. I can't endure the noises he makes. It seems that his love for his violin is the entering wedge to his unfolding—if unfolding has a wedge. They let him make all the horrible noises he wants to just to train him to get something of some sort out of his exertions. He doesn't seem to care for tunes; but draws out the most dreadful wails of sound and says they are things he's *seen*. He must have lived in an awful lot of nightmares if they were as terrible as that! Good night. I'll send the pattern over in the morning."

Mrs. Burton went into the house. Alexander, otherwise, Hi-Timmy Tidmouse, was perched on the piano stool, his undecided hair pointing, as usual, in all directions. A piercing intelligence shone from his eyes with such intensity, it seemed to send tangible rays into the unknown. His head was bowed lovingly to meet the violin which he had snuggled under his chin. He had drawn an ottoman up to the stool on which to rest his feet, and, with utter unconcern, his boots were planted on a pale blue satin cover where were painted extraordinary pink roses. Amy, the little twelve-year old mother of this bespattered travesty, sat in tears on the other side of the room.

"He's spoiled my roses! I feel as if hornets were stinging the inside of my ear," she wailed, as her mother appeared.

"Shut up!" came the ungracious rejoinder from the piano stool. The search-light was turned off in the eyes that now showed themselves sullen and dull. Their owner drew the bow passionately across the strings and again the search-light crept over the sea of the unknown from the wakened soul within.

It was one note that cried out in response to the short, sharp stroke and swift downward sweep of the bow.

"Stop fussing over those painted things and I'll tell you what these sounds mean," he said with petulant irritation at the child's tears. "This is the way the cars uster 'go smashing against the freight yards, and this is the way it uster jar the house, so my mother uster fall down in fits—leastways, that is what Dr. Wehr said was what did it. The shock gave her catalectic fits—"

"Cataleptic," said Amy, stifling her sobs.

"What's the difference. They was fits!"

"You don't want to give us fits, too, do you, Alexander?" Mrs. Burton said, cheerily. "Show us different notes, do."

"No, I won't! There wasn't any difference in what I uster hear. It was always the same," cried the child, and out of his undeveloped face there loomed the vision of a soul in torment, now showing an angel, paralyzed by a horror of which his soul never lost sight; now seeming a mass of little more than protoplasm; now flashing forth, not malignity, but undirected mind force, which, like the first steps of a baby, may result in weal or woe.

"The long rush—then the awful shock—and then my mother in fits—all on one note."

"But Alexander, you don't want to have fits, too! Can't you recall something happier about your mother?" Mrs. Burton folded her veil and blew into her gloves, preparatory to laying them in the desk drawer.

The boy drew the bow across the string with a fierceness that made Mrs. Burton jump, while Amy screamed and the baby waked and cried.

"Gracious, Alexander! All right, baby, mother is

here. Come down, you sweet tootsey, if you are lonely. Dear, mother must lock the windows before she goes up-stairs. Come, Alexander, it is time to go to bed. Al-ex-an-der! Do make some other sort of noise! It sounds like somebody dying!"

"It's the way my baby sounded when she pitched out of a five-story window. When they picked her up, she was all dead and mashed, and this is the way my mother sounded, and this is the way the street sounded, I didn't sound at all! *I was still! I listened!*"

It was horrible, how, in view of the tenseless, expressionless explanation, the wail of the one note took on the heart of the life *which, through his memories, had become cell and tissue of the boy*. To the mother, the horror was accentuated through the cries of her own child, which, though only the healthy bawl of a four-year-old baby howling because he felt like it, seemed to partake of the death screech of the falling infant, as portrayed by Alexander's dissociated tones of voice, but unforgettable agony.

"Mother's coming, blessed! Come, Alexander, that's a good boy. Don't you hear baby crying? Let's go up to him."

"I want to go to my own baby," monotoned Alexander.

"You can't. Your baby's in heaven."

"I want her."

"But dear—yes, baby, do be still, mother will be up in a minute. Amy, run and see if you can't quiet him. If you can't, bring him down. Now, Alexander, your little sister—"

"I don't want any guff! I want my baby! She's got hers, I want mine." He jerked his bow in the direction of the little girl fast disappearing up the stairs.

"You'll see her when you've learned to—"

"I don't want to stop to learn! I want her now!"

This is the way she screamed, and then came the freight cars crashing, and then mother had another cataflectic fit— ”

“ A-lex-an-der! You will be crazy! How do the saws sound when you are making boxes in the carpentry shop? ”

The expression of Alexander's eyes changed slightly. He made a rasping noise on the strings which made Mrs. Burton grit her teeth; but she pursued the advantage she thought she had gained, in changing, if ever so little, for the instant, the picture in the mind that memory had inducted into his blood and tissue.

“ Now think! Don't you recall? It was not all on one note. It went up and down. Show me.”

Alexander's search-light went out for a mental vision of the sounds of the saw. He had just completed what seemed to him a fair repetition of what was incorporate in his being, through memory, when Baby Burton toddled in, pretty and warm from his nap. His cheeks glowed with the exertion of the lusty howling, which, now, in the attainment of his desire to be near his mother, and, primarily, perhaps, with the delight of having his own way, dimpled with gleeful smiles. His little toes peeped out from under his nightgown and his hands reached forward to grab at the violin, as he sped hilariously across the floor.

Angrily, Alexander jerked the violin away, trying to draw it under his body to protect it from the child's clutch. The sudden movement brought it against the piano leg and the delicate stem snapped from the body.

For an instant Alexander was motionless; then his concentrated grief blazed out. Seizing his idol, he flung it hysterically at the child, missing his aim, and it crashed through the window just behind. Then, with a howl of anguish that recalled to Mrs. Burton the pent-up agony of his recently voiced picture, he

dashed into the night. She hastened after him; but Baby Burton yelled lustily as he witnessed her exit. Dark night, with the figure of a rapidly receding child were before her; a trembling little girl and a crying infant were behind. She turned back and closed the door.

Tom Landell had reached home and was deep in a pile of physiologies and psychologies when the telephone interrupted his study. In response to his hello, Amy's childish voice, pitched high with excitement, called loudly,

"Mr. Landell, Alexander Steny is a-putting down the street as fast as he can go and there isn't any one to catch him, 'cause mamma can't leave baby."

Hanging up the receiver, he took his hat.

"I am going to hunt up Hi-Timmy Tidmouse, mother," he said, as he passed through the hall. "He has run away from the Burtons'."

Almost on the wave of his good night, came the chug of his motor-cycle as it went speeding down the street like some strange bird.

Suddenly, from the wayside, there came a cry of terror. Slowing down, he alighted to find the source.

Huddled amid the shrubbery, in a frightened little heap, he found Hi-Timmy.

"What is it!" he said tenderly. "This is your friend, Tom Landell. What is all this about?"

"I heard the smashing of the cars," quivered Timmy, crouching back into the darkness.

"It's my dreadfully noisy machine." Tom drew the little figure up, supporting it reassuringly with his strong arms. "What do you want to do?"

"I want to die!" shouted the child. "So's I can't hear the sound of the cars any more, nor my baby when she screamed, nor hear my mother in her catalectic fits! I want to die!"

"It is a strange idea we have about dying." Tom held the little fellow close. "If you do not want to hear those sounds after you are dead, as you call it, you must begin to listen for something better and sweeter, now."

"I can't!" he sobbed bitterly. "So must I always hear it?"

In his agony, through some rift in his ill-structured tissues, there gleamed a nature so finely keyed that it compelled the rickety instrument to express him through it.

It was no time to exhort. Tom drew the child more closely to him.

"Don't you want to ride my wheel?"

He lifted him to the seat of his motor-cycle as he spoke.

Hi-Timmy shivered.

"Take me down! I'm afraid of the noise! Quick!" he screamed.

"Then walk along beside me. I will walk, too, so you may not hear the thing chug. I have the dearest little spot you ever saw for you to curl up in—just as soft and still! You can lie there and sleep and sleep—"

"I've smashed my violin," said Hi-Timmy brokenly, "and I don't care for anything else in the world, but it."

"Well! Well! Don't you like me?"

Timmy looked doubtful.

"Nor the piano inside of you, where the brain marks down what you hear, and that does not let you know about anything you refuse to know about or listen to?"

Timmy, his storm spent, was too tired to respond, and Tom, having telephoned Mrs. Burton of the child's safety, took the little fellow to his room to sleep the sleep of oblivion.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"The secret of happiness is Joy in the work of our hands."

EARLY the next morning, while Hi-Timmy was still asleep, Tom sought Dr. Wehr and laid the case before him. The wise philosopher listened attentively, and was silent for some time after Tom had ceased speaking.

"May the cause of the outburst have been the association of ideas with a home, a mother and a baby?" he questioned, slowly, aloud. "We must select surroundings with a view to reforming and replacing, not to the strengthening of, old memories and pictures which are working disaster. I am not sorry that the violin is out of commission for awhile. We raised him out of distressing memories on the wings of sound, but he needs other support now. Other centres of vision must be awakened. It is possible in a child to change completely the ruling elements of desire and motive by controlling—no, no, now I am learning to avoid that word—by coöperating with—experiences; and by eliminating, constructively withdrawing the mind's activities from consideration of undesirable memories. Memory structure is incorporate through the being. It is improved or rebuilt by setting certain processes to work and guiding others—inductive of brain growth. With new growth acquired, 'new ideas dawn as suddenly as lightning illumines the landscape.'"

"Suppose I keep him with me awhile? My mother is glad to have him, and the surroundings and influ-

ences are less like his previous ones than may be found in a home like the Burtons'."

"Good! Don't assume any pedagogic attitude toward him," he smiled. "Only we old fellows realize how useless that is, and how antagonizing. Let him be care-free and as leisurely as he pleases, providing he does not lapse into dilatoriness and procrastination. The new fibres will incorporate new memories, naturally and easily. Skilfully check inaccuracies or exaggerations of expression without limiting the scope of the imagination. I believe this marks the path from inspiration to aspiration. Don't let the vision be the goal of your desire, however. The goal is so far ahead. We used to be taught to keep the mind on that and groan over the reaching of it. It is the attaining, my boy, that should keep us nourished with courage. When our ultimate arrives, we shall scarcely know it. It will have come to realization naturally and left us the zest of progress toward the new vision unfolding from the old. Be discriminative, not excessive, in his exercise. This case interests me extremely. Not all horrors, formed on terrorizing experiences and pictures or visions, are as easily traced as in Alexander—nevertheless, they inhere in every mind."

Tom took the next train out from town. He found Hi-Timmy moping in the dressing-room leading from the bedroom where he had slept the night before. It was evident he had been crying.

"What joy can I find for the little fellow that will be antidote for the poisonous precipitate of sorrow?" he meditated, meanwhile diverting him by his own preparation for luncheon. After a while, Hi-Timmy inferred that it would please his friend, should he, also, prepare for the meal. Though the following was not very accurate, it was accomplished after a fashion. Tom did not object that the comb made slight acquaint-

tance with the unruly hair. After the child had eaten a satisfying meal, Tom took his hat.

"I am going to the woods, Timmy. I found a chipmunk's nest, yesterday."

Timmy did not speak. His eyes looked as if he would like to go. Tom paused.

"Want to come?"

There was no reply; but the boy moved slowly toward the door.

"May I go?" inquired Agnes.

"Always, Agnesia," and the three struck into the park by a short cut.

The air was soft and still in the woods, and the singing of the hemlocks made their tranquil companionship more virile because it seemed to breathe life more abundant. Oh, it was beautiful. Hi-Timmy laid his hand gently on a tree trunk, as the blind do. He seemed to listen, rather than look, wonderingly, into the branches, as if he expected to find strings and pipes, as in the musical instruments he had seen. At length, he turned a wistful face toward Tom.

"If I had my violin, I'd show you how these sound." He threw himself heart-brokenly upon the ground, burying his face. After a while, he looked up,

"I've been thinking. Dr. Wehr gave me that violin. Do you suppose he would give me another one?"

"Why no," said Tom in a matter-of-fact manner. "He bought you that one so you could use it, not smash it. You did just as you chose with it, you know."

"Then can I never make pictures on a violin again?"

"If you choose to think up a way to get one for yourself, you can."

"I don't know how."

"Tell me how you broke yours."

Tom's heart was full of tenderness for the soul looking out from those frightened eyes, seeking, though it might not know it, for more awareness of its possibilities. "What did you do that night, that you are—" he checked his words—"No, not sorry," he said within himself, "that is poison,—I want him to feel only uplift—oh for a set of new words not steeped in the depressing gloom of man's half interpretations!—I mean, what happened just before the violin broke?"

"I dug my heels into that little girl's painting and made her cry."

"We never can change that fact; but can you think of a way to help make up to her for what you have done?"

"Not unless I give her another—"

"I will give her one," Agnes interrupted enthusiastically. "It shall be—"

"Timmy must give with himself, not with you," said Tom, meaningly. "Now, Timmy, how can you do it?"

"I don't know," helplessly.

"Can you black boots?"

"Yes."

"Supposing you do mine, at ten cents a pair, until you get money enough to buy Amy new silk and paints, and pay for three lessons for her. You never can repay; but you can help things go in a happy way from now on."

Agnes looked at the little mite. A truth was revealed to her she long had known abstractly, but for the first time realized she was not personally demonstrating. Through the child's face, she saw he was perceiving and embodying processes resulting from outside stimulus to brain centres. He was arranging and organizing the plan of redemption, sending from

the brain centres the impulse to do. Would this impulse travel from brain centre to brain centre, inducing vacuous longing and dreaming, only; from brain centre to muscle, inducing irresponsible impulse, such as had overcome him when he had made his wild venture at ridding himself of interference, or could it be trained to will from brain centre to brain centre, as well as from brain centre to muscle, balancing, in him, planning and execution! Tom was going to work hard to find out.

Meanwhile, Hi-Timmy had entered upon the path of perception. Though far from his first offence, it was the first time he had understood. With the revelation had come life and enthusiasm. He had not, as Carl Ewald has said, "The black sting of remorse in his soul nor the black cockade of forgiveness in his hat."

"Will you help me buy the stuff?" There was a new light of interest in his eyes, all anxious, as he was, to atone.

"The satin? Yes, because you wouldn't know about that; but you do know about blacking boots and making a square deal, don't you!"

"Yes." Timmy held his head higher as the thought enfibred him with courage, bringing him from his huddled, stooping position, into the erectness of man.

"Then what happened?" Tom spoke in so matter-of-fact a tone that Timmy was not depressed, but rather uplifted by it.

"After I broke my violin, I got mad and smashed it through a window. I didn't go to kill the baby; but I wouldn't have minded if I had, I was so mad."

Tom evaded this part of the confession. It would entail dealing with complexities, the way out of which he felt neither he nor Timmy was equal to.

"So you smashed the window! Mrs. Burton is a

poor woman. She cannot afford to pay for that glass! What will she do!"

"Couldn't you give me some money to buy a new one?"

"I? Oh dear no! Why should I give Mrs. Burton a window! You broke it, you should replace it!"

"I can't. I'd put it back if I knew how, but I don't." He looked despairingly at Tom, his eyes wistful and sad.

"Stand still, just where you are. Think, way deep down, how you can get that window mended. There is a teacher inside of you."

Hi-Timmy stood still a part of the life which moves in God. His eyes rolled vacuously among the trees; but evidently found no answer there. His expression changed. He was finding his mentor. In a moment, his face brightened.

"Isn't there some one about here who mends windows?"

"Yes, there is a very good man in the village, named Winters."

"Will you show me how to get him, or must I do that too? I will black his boots until I get money to pay him to put it in."

"Two strokes and the words, help me, left out," Tom thought as he shouted for joy.

"Now we will go to the glazier's—the man who sets the glass,"—and they started on the pleasant walk to town, Timmy believing himself fully equal to meeting Mr. Winters. When he did, however, his old inertia overcome him and Tom had to explain.

"Good-day, Mr. Winters," was Tom's greeting. "Here is a boy who has broken some glass and wants to put it in. As he doesn't know how to do it himself, he wants the next best thing,—pay some one who does."

"I can't"—Timmy forgot this was his own suggestion. "I haven't got any money."

"You have legs, I see," said Mr. Winters. "It happens my horse has gone lame and for the last few mornings I have had to carry my materials to work. I will pay you twenty-five cents each day for the present, to come at six thirty in the morning and stay round awhile, in case I have to send back for anything. I know the size of Mrs. Burton's windows. Why, I guess it will take you about a week's work, sonny. When it is done, Mrs. Burton will forgive you for breaking it."

"That is the usual idea, Mr. Winter, but honestly, do you suppose that helps?" interposed Tom. "How should her attitude of mind avail against the fact that he has betrayed his trust! The point is to make right with himself and receive the soul sunlight and air the Great Heart gives. She may say she forgives him. Of course, that does her good and in a way makes him happier as the superficial currents bathe him exteriorly; but does it lift the responsibility from him, or really touch his character?"

"That is a question!" pondered Mr. Winters. "That is a question!"

"*Perhaps* the tenderness of her heart as she really forgives will touch his consciousness and give it the spur of growth; *perhaps*, it will be a soporific to it. I very much wonder which it does, as I look about and see that almost every instance I recall of what is called *forgiveness*, unaccompanied by the insistence that the atonement come from the offender instead of the innocent, has resulted in the inhibition of the former. I also notice that the sense of forgiveness of others often saddles a soul who has atoned with the weight of past immaturity that grows into damning remorse and pre-

vents the currents of the universal from playing and breathing into all the breath of life."

"We should all be more stalwart if we lived on that basis. I know just what you mean by the weight of the forgiveness. The best forgiveness is to leave it to God, as you say." Mr. Winter's ruddy, sturdy face brightened as he spoke. "God is too large to keep in mind against us our action of yesterday. He is great enough to efface it from our memories that it may grow in our characters."

The three left the glazier's. Hi-Timmy's spine straightened again, not with pride but with the stirring of life within, which had told him how to act with a view to upbuilding what, in a moment of rage, he had torn down. When Mrs. Burton met them at the door, it drooped again and he hung the little head that had so many states of consciousness to unfold before it would hold itself always courageously in appearance and in truth."

"Well, well, Alexander," she said, cheerily. "How do you do! I have made some tarts purposely for you. Do you want some?"

"I'd like them," returned Timmy, scanning in nervous haste every corner of the room. When he espied the object of his search, he ran to it and hugged it in his arms.

"Oh, my violin, my violin, shall I ever make sounds on you again!" and behind the instrument he burst into tears which he wiped quickly away. "But I'll have you yet, and whole."

"You can think of the beautiful pictures you are going to make for us when this is mended," said Tom, and having explained that next morning early Timmy would be there with the glazier to set the window pane, the three returned to the Landells', Timmy bearing his violin.

When they had reached home, Tom sent the boy to prepare for dinner, then threw himself into a chair and mopped his forehead.

"Jupiter, mother, how did you bring up children! I thought I knew something about child-culture, from being in an institution with them; but there you can turn them over to some one else for at least an hour or two, once in a while. Mothers have them trailing after them or before them or alongside of them all the time, don't they! School training and the real thing is an equation. On one side—charts, a room filled with appliances with thermometer, barometer and electrical conditions and ideas; on the other side a big X. I am exhausted with just these few hours of X. I am as slimpsy as wet tissue paper; like Mrs. Perriwinkle's curls during dog-days; like a picnic crowd caught in a shower; in short, my two hours' attempt to teach the other fellow to bear his own burden, instead of following the line of least resistance and doing it myself, has resulted in making me feel like a basket of smashed eggs—and I have only just begun!"

With an interest infecting every one in the house, Hi-Timmy Tidmouse rose the next morning. By six-thirty he was at Mr. Winters' shop, watching him take the shutters from the low windows, that, peeping some three feet above the sidewalk, lighted the cellar where he kept his paints and varnishes. There was a very nice smell about it all, Hi-Timmy thought. It reminded him of the woods where he had straightened things out the day before. He put his nose to the pail to take a deep breath of the fascinating mixture, and received a big daub of green paint on its tip. This made him smile. Nothing in all his short life had made him smile much and he wondered, though prob-

ably unconsciously, if waking up to work out something for oneself always makes one feel alive inside.

They found Mrs. Burton frying cakes for breakfast. She insisted on giving them some before they began work. The two were nothing loth.

"I've started to buy you some stuff to make you a new rose piece," Timmy looked shyly at the rosy-cheeked little girl as she helped him and Mr. Winters bountifully to the cakes her mother was taking from the griddle. He felt interest in her, now that he was trying to do something to dissolve in her memory the tears of that horrible night when he had made himself and others so unhappy.

"Oh, how nice of you!" Amy colored with pleasure, as, having put six fresh, hot cakes on Timmy's plate, she took some herself. "I had worked so hard on those roses, and only got them finished the day before you—before they got hurt,—" politely refraining from pointing her speech too incisively toward the vandal. "I didn't mind working on them, but I did mind having them spoiled."

"I am to get ten cents for every pair of boots I black for Mr. Tom," Hi-Timmy's heart warmed more and more toward his little companion. "It takes an awful time to pay for things, don't it!" thoughtfully.

"Lots longer than it takes to smash 'em," retorted Mrs. Burton briskly, overhearing, as she came from the stove with more cakes.

"Mrs. Burton, if you give us any more we shall be too full to work, and we must get at it," said Mr. Winters.

"I should say you were at it already," Mrs. Burton laughed. "How is the old church getting on, Mr. Winters?"

"Mrs. Burton, I am ashamed to tell you." Mr. Winters laid down his knife and fork, "I am just

ashamed to tell you. We decent ones feel disgraced by it all, and some of us are heart-broken. We don't look at it as being the Lord's way of doing. I was at that meeting the night you walked off with our cream. I ain't saying it wasn't the thing to do. I suspicioned it was at the time and I think so still. I did hope that what Mr. Landell said about coöperating would come to pass, but it won't be possible, I fear, for the mess we are in now is disgraceful. I would have gone with you but I thought my mother wouldn't get over it. She would have, though. It seems she wanted to go, herself, and wouldn't because of me. How we do play criss-cross in life!"

"Playing to persons instead of to principle, Mr. Herman says!"

"You know that Mrs. Bryce's John has followed her!"

"She told me the other day that he had hardly spoken to her for months after she left the church; but that now, she believed that the truth she had dared declare for God was bringing her a husband in a sense she never had had one before."

Mrs. Burton sat down and drew the syrup jug towards her plate piled high with the trophies of her housewifery.

"It hurts me to go there and hear the new minister say what he said last Sabbath!"

"What was that?"

"That it makes him sick and angry to hear about this divine spark! That it is sacrilegious to talk about any divine spark in human beings—that there is no God in us. Wasn't that awful! What do you suppose the denunciations in the Bible mean—those of Jesus, I mean?"

"Since I have been up here and heard Mr. Herman preach, I have decided that it was Jesus' way of waking

the consciousness of a hard, wild, unthinking people to a sense of their moral accountability, and that it means the same as it does when He talks to the more awakened ones of justice and mercy and love and helping others. It's a great mistake to think Jesus has ever said He would relieve us of our accountability. Now, I can hear sermons that used to make me sad or angry and see just what sort of people they are fitted for, and I don't, as I used to, take to myself what is meant for others. The men Jesus hurled his denunciations at stand out to me as a fiery mob who understood only blood and vengeance. According to the way He words His message, I can see before Him the Salvation Army, the emotional sects, the intellectual seekers, or the spiritual ones among them all. I begin to understand and to be *conscious* that I understand. It makes me happy and brave and brotherly, instead of separate and antagonistic."

"That is fine. How did it happen that the Hermans were so entirely alone? Did you ever hear?"

"I was told they were lovely people and very wealthy; but that after the father died the manager lost their money—for the son had taken up the ministry instead of business. The man took every cent he could lay his hands on, but in some way that the law couldn't touch him,—misfortune, he claimed it was, business and political conditions and such like that may be true and may be something to hide behind. Even their house insurance was unpaid and when the house burned down they had nothing but the shooting-box on Mt. Nodel. They went there to try to pull themselves together and the son was taken ill—you know the rest. I think there was a good deal of bitterness on the son's part—I don't wonder! I can see he is trying to idealize the processes of growth in his own life and I am willing to take his teaching

even if he can't quite live it yet, for I know he knows what the rest of us are going through."

"How do you know he is bitter?"

"By the way he says Father in the prayers and benediction—as if He didn't think God had made much of a showing in fatherliness toward him! I never hear people say anything without listening back to the way they say it. I learned that from my brother."

"I guess the Hermans' experience wasn't any too easy to take from a loving Father, and the newspaper publicity given them was awful! What does it mean in the Bible—the constant allusions to being lost?" Mr. Winters reverted to the topic uppermost in his mind. "This new minister talks about them, constantly."

"I can explain better by telling stories. I was at an evening's entertainment with my brother—the organ builder. There was a reciter who gave us Tennyson's 'Crossing the Bar.' After the entertainment, my brother went to her and said, 'Madame, your work was very fine; but what was in your mind when you recited "Crossing the Bar"? You never got over it. There was something that prevented your crossing.'

"She looked puzzled, then said, 'The only way I can explain it is, that when I was a child I was very nearly drowned, when grounded on one.' So I think we are in a mind maze. When we begin to know that all right things are real, we don't get our own earth shadows in the way of our Sun which is God, and we see the path. Before that, in a certain manner, we are lost, even on the very spot where, later, we find ourselves."

"You make that very clear," said Mr. Winters, admiringly. "Tell me this,—what does it mean when it says God is a consuming fire?"

"I take it, that God gathers all to Himself. He makes *all* His own. That frightens those who don't understand; but makes those who do understand glad and happy. They know they are being strengthened, purified and reinforced by this cleansing power. It doesn't frighten me. I think it is beautiful. Tell me something about the church. I don't mean to dwell on ugly things, but I am interested. I did hope we could come together—those that like to be scolded and frightened, to get them to do right, and we who find our help in being taught and encouraged. I don't see why there can't be one church with God as the Unit and the Purpose, to find the 'relationship of seemingly unrelated things,' instead of tearing and picking every thought to pieces as if we were crows. You see from the way I talk—so different from what I used to—how much I am learning by being in the sunlight of truth here on the hill. Go on, tell me about the church?"

"You know what Frisby said about the lien on the land? Well, it is true. He has held us down for years by ramming his father's gift down our throats after our own fathers had swallowed it."

Amy giggled.

"There, Amy, don't you laugh at me. That was a speech I'll allow."

"I don't see how he could'a rammed it down your throat after your fathers had swallowed it," returned the child with another giggle.

"He has, until I wish we could have bought it out of the general contribution box, instead of out of one man's pocket. His father, in an unworldly manner I hope he wasn't knowing to, had the papers made out to the three men, as individuals, instead of trustees, and now, Frisby and his wife, and her brother, whose father was another of the trustees, are laying claim

to it as their property. It has been put off and put off and now is coming up in court next week, and we decent ones are ashamed. Some of us are making a move to worship elsewhere. We aren't ready to give up the old traditions; but we are willing to go so far as to try for new light on them,—”

“That's all we ask up on the hill—”

“To call what we do, now, worship, is an insult to the Lord. Now, Timmy, if you've eaten your cakes, we'll turn to and fix up Mrs. Burton's window.”

Timmy sprang up with a vitality that was wholly new to him. The glass was unwrapped, he was initiated into the preparation of the putty, and then, substantially assisted by Mr. Winters, he put the pane in place, Amy and Mrs. Burton watching interestedly.

“That's in now, in good shape, but it's an awful dirty window.” Mr. Winters stood off from the house and viewed the glass. “I suppose the one you broke was clean.”

“I 'spose so!” sighed Timmy. His vitality was ebbing after the excitement and the exertion.

“Now, if I had your stuff, I'd have made my square deal with you,” said Timmy to Amy. “It does take an awful long time, doesn't it, to straighten out a little smashing! I've only got ten cents towards it!” Then, despondently, “If I had my violin, I'd show you how it sounded when I cut that glass!”

“Thank the great horn spoon you haven't,” Mrs. Burton said, vigorously, gritting her teeth. “If you had tried to show me after the fashion of that night, there might be more smashing, and this time I couldn't be sure that you would be the one to do it!”

Hi-Timmy went to bed that night smiling, to dream of groves carpeted with delicious, soft putty, that smelt of linseed oil and turpentine, and that you could shape with your fingers and knife; and of a great big

violin, whole, and his very own, with which he could express, to his heart's delight, all the woodland sounds he had heard, as he lay beneath the odorous, tremulous trees.

After he was sound asleep and far on his journey of wonderful adventure, Mr. Winters and two other men were ushered into the library.

"Good evening, Mr. Winters," said Mr. Landell, cordially shaking hands, "I am glad to see you, and you, too, Prout, and Turner. How goes everything in town?"

Mr. Winters straightened back in his chair with a sturdy movement that strained every fibre of its stout mechanism, nervously rubbing the palms of his hands to and fro as he spoke.

"I'm bound to say, sir, they've taken a new turn since that church of yours began teaching the ethics of civics, as I believe you call it. Public opinion is a great thing, Mr. Landell, and public opinion has been waked up by that teaching of yours, till, somehow, those hoodlums that used to make things noisy and give the police trouble have subsided a good deal. You teach us to spread the tidings given us by the church and bear it into the working paths of life. There is something deeper than efficiency and civilization, isn't there, when both have threatened to crush the world on the same lines that savagery has done but with so much more skill."

"There's another thing. These things have to be taught so carefully. A very good man, teaching that workman, brother to brother, should wage the war against tyranny, nearly precipitated a riot in my saw mill in contention against *me*. You teach that brotherhood is coöperation with all parts of the body politic, not aggression against any part. It's wonderful how, as soon as that thought crept in, I was

no longer considered a tyrant but a man with the rest of them, trying to work out the best for all," put in Mr. Turner. "I wasn't in favor of mixing civics and religion; but I see you can't unmix 'em, so to speak."

"That is the way I feel, Turner. Everything is based on Unity."

Musingly, Mr. Landell sought the heart of the flame, as if to fathom its secrets.

"How are matters at the old church?" There was a touch of tenderness in his tones. "I love the old church. It was my father's and mother's, and they were saintly."

Mr. Prout hitched his chair forward with a confidential gesture, as his host stooped and threw some driftwood on the fire.

"Mr. Landell, things couldn't be worse," Mr. Prout followed his gesture with words. "We have come to talk it over with you."

"We want to act decently and in order," said Mr. Turner. "Frisby has taken his case into court and it is up to us whether we fight the claim. I, for one, don't want to go to law over a church affair."

"I do not believe the court will sustain the case. It is too evident the men were servants of a body."

"We are in no position to build, for you took a great deal of our root with you that night. It seems foolish to clutter up the landscape with any more ill-kept, half-filled, dead-and-alive church properties, when there is a communion like yours, ready to receive all grades of wisdom on the one basis of God the Maker and Finisher of all, giving the hand of fellowship on the truth that worship to God is service to man. We aren't ready to give up the creed; but can't we come in with you,—in part? If you could rent us your auditorium for a Sunday service and Sunday School, we

will manage the rest at the houses. I suspect you'll see us creeping into your heart bit by bit till we are all yours,—”

“And ours is all yours,” interrupted Mr. Landell. “Belief is as a garment. It fits our embodiment. You comprehend the line of march splendidly. We do not wish to criticize old dogma, neither to become standardizers. What in one state of consciousness seems a misapprehension, is not so in another. We wish to involve the all-inclusive social expression of a spiritual purpose; the growing out of all sorts of slavery towards freedom, personal, civic, universal. This impels expression of freedom and is constructive. Let us stop talking of retrogression in the churches. It has been steady uplift. Every oncoming generation of ministers and of congregations has higher standards than those before. Every day, congregations look for greater and deeper nobility of character among their members. Every day, less is heard of a lost world and more of one universe, precious and valuable in its continual making; less about the acceptance of a Jesus-God of two centuries ago whose wounds are kept open and bleeding by our sins, imposed upon us by our vile nature,—and more of the inherent divinity of human nature of which Jesus is prototype redeeming us to the reaching of that type through His example; more of the inherent divinity of our natures one with God, which we are to express; more of the preparation of souls to nurture and home the Christ Spirit, making each individual a redeemer to souls still asleep.”

“I have been to a great many of your services,” said Mr. Turner, “and have learned of Jesus as I never knew Him before. I see, too, that no man liveth or dieth to himself but each to the glory of the whole. To rejoice in being saved while one believes any

brother or sister lost, now seems to me impossible of belief."

"The church owes this duty to society—that it think fearlessly upon the laws governing the relations of human life and interpret religion in such terms as to unite coöperatively, men now divided by their specializations of thought and labor. It should express the principle of social betterment, not make social betterment the basis. With gladness, it should train the mind toward recognition of the Spiritual power which provides moral force for social coördination. It should train men in the spiral relations of life—a constant mounting, in thought and desire, toward the conception of the divine humanity demonstrated in Jesus, the Master, who worked on nature's plane to express Universal Principle through nature's forces and instruments. Let me talk this over with some of the others and arrange to meet you and plan together," Mr. Landell concluded, as the callers rose to go, and, with relief written on their sturdy faces, bade their host good night.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Habits are principles which have become instincts and have passed over into flesh and blood."
Amiel.

A DISREPUTABLE looking object in training togs was trotting along the country road, and old Mrs. Frisby, as she passed, dropped her eyes in maidenly constraint, remarking audibly, that "One might as well face the Boston Art Museum statuary department exercising on the square, as to meet those disgraceful athletes going about in less'n their nightshirts."

For almost the first time in his life, Tom's mind was not fully on the work he had in hand. Truth to tell, he never had been quite so care-free since the set-to with the bear. His visit to Mattee Sue had broadened his immaturity into something far richer and deeper. Love, wonderful revealer, had involved new pictures in his mind. Besides, he was feeling an irritating disquietude as he realized that the race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong. He was irritated by his sarcastic reflections that not he, with his philosophy, put up and labelled pharmaceutically, had saved their lives when almost in the bear's clutches, but that it was Agnes, the dweller among the stars, as some had called her, who, by her sense of impending need, had provided him with the implement which had stayed him at the pit's edge, and who, by her swift thought and prompt action, had enticed the beast to doom.

"I don't feel so cocksure as I did that I can teach Agnes," he mused, slowing his pace, and, out of tune

with his exercise, dropping into a walk, "I don't wish to lose my assurance, but I do want a perspective on myself. I wonder what sort of puling creature I should be if I had been fed on the damning effects of loving *persons*, and impressed with the danger of loving God through humanity, or of finding God in humanity. She has always been on the wrong side of the fence for comfort, has Agnesia, for when she began to come out of this nightmare, she was condemned as erratic or irreligious. Do you think, Tom Landell, you would have done as well as she has, and moved on an orbit so much larger than the majority, with as much grace and helpfulness, making so few mistakes in the unknown country she is treading! Pouf! You know you wouldn't!"

Walking to the boat-house, he put a sweater over his "*disabilly*," as the irate Mrs. Frisby designated it, pulled out a boat, shot into the centre of the lake. He endeavored, though contrary to the theory he often propounded to his sister, to work off, by vigorous physical exertion, this new experience,—dissatisfaction with self.

He rowed for some time, soothed by the beauty about him. The waters lay transparent, caressing miniature peninsulas which pointed, lance-like, or narrowed sinuously toward the forests. Rounding one of these curves, he came upon Agnes, alone, in a boat.

"How relieved I am to see you," she called. "I thought I'd take a row—and my arms gave out."

"You should have known better than to overtax yourself," was on the tip of Tom's tongue. Instead, he said, beneath his breath, "Cut it out, ignoramus, and learn a few things." Then he called cheerily, "Throw your rope over and we'll wander about awhile."

Agnes tossed the rope across into her brother's

hands, and the two trolled silently, the water humming its pleasant song about the boats.

"Agnes, did you ever see any farther into those wells?" said Tom after a while.

"No; but I am far from satisfied that it was imagination. I want to receive messages while I am in alert happy consciousness of my worth, as a messenger, to receive intelligible advice. I do not wish to be thrown by some inhibiting force into a depleted condition, that I may be worked on. It would be a comparatively easy matter to cut the whole thing from my life, but it is too tremendous a gift to toss aside. I must learn how to use it. As to the well, I have felt that it would be mercenary to think much about it; but Aunt Luella often said she was going to leave me her money, that she had no direct heirs, and that she loved me best of her husband's heirs. It must be all right, however. Probably Mr. Jenkins was nice to her. He is an attractive and very magnetic man when sober. I should wish her to do with her own as she pleased. To change the subject—it has been so wonderful I have not voiced it before, but what you said, after we left the keeper at the quarries the day we encountered the bear, gave me a clearer interpretation of universal love in personal manifestation. I realized, as never before, my unity with all elements and with all created things, and that in doing to the least of these, I am doing unto Him. No one can make character if he shuns opportunity to practice, can he!"

Tom gasped.

"Are you loving me *for practice!*" he burst out, in his state of self-conscious dissatisfaction, taking to himself the remark he generally would have taken in the abstract and passed over. He was humbled still more in his own estimation of himself, at what he chose to consider a wholesale classing of himself with

"the least of these." "That means any old thing in the world," he continued indignantly. "Get into the light of what you believe! Don't carry a big umbrella to hide from yourself the very view you have climbed so high to find. Suppose I told you that the only reason father and mother and I love you is because we need to train personal love for character's sake. What would you think of that for high-handed selfishness?"

"I should think you were right!"

"You make me shiver in every fibre!"

"I make myself shiver the same way. It is what is breaking my heart in the midst of seeming happiness. Oh, Tomsey, don't you see!"

"No, I don't! There seems nothing tangible about you, even to pinch. I am here, your brother, by blood and sympathy,—"

"The second counts; the first may or may not."

"Don't you acknowledge I bear a different relation to you than does the drunken scissors-grinder who frightened you so that you ran all the way to the summer house for my protection!"

"I was a coward and did not recognize the unity between us."

"Don't get into that selfless tangle,—"

"Just now, you accused me of high-handed selfishness! I must see God in every being."

"Then do it in a common sense way. Do you *want* to love human beings?"

"Yes." Her face became a radiant crimson. Tom looked at her, a softening light in his eyes.

"H'm," beneath his breath. Then aloud,

"You would like that money of Aunt Luella's and think you have no right to investigate a perfectly honorable claim! Don't you think it is honorable!"

"I won't put out my hand to claim what may not be mine."

"Are you going to repudiate it? Use common sense."

"'Ye objects brought my thoughts from diffusion and formed them into shape,'" quoted Agnes, a mystical look in her eyes. "You are right. But I won't claim it. The Maker of all knows what is mine and I will make myself a conscious distributing centre of His wisdom. Then, if it is right, the symbol of the two wells will be explained."

"You are a strange combination of action and inaction." He looked at her meditatively, as they trolled along, side by side.

"What has become of Ross Mevin," he said at length. "Is it your fault?" Then, with a keen thrust of his intellect into her mind, he said, almost fiercely,

"Are you going to play round Philip Herman until you get wrapped up in the meshes of misery? You seem dangerously interested in him. I've lived side by side with you and, notwithstanding my inherent belief in your philosophy, I feel as if you were always standing on the edge of a crater from which I must rescue you; but, while I am thinking up the means, you fly, above and over, and settle on some new vantage ground. I am awfully worried about this melodramatic interest you take in Herman's work. Some of it is the real love of principle, or of forming thoughts out of diffusion into shape as you said just now, but there is a personal quality about it, that,—don't get your affections or your emotions tied up with that man. He would kill you! Nothing against him, he's a fine fellow; but for you! Well, don't let's poison ourselves by argument. It's a bad precipitate. I came pretty near taking a dose. You see, you were

born on the spiritual plane and have to come down to struggle with the details of our making. That is what makes me always fearful lest you don't know how to use the materials given you. You live in the realms of universal love: when you attempt to actualize it in individuals, do, for heaven's sake, choose the right man."

"I meant the same thing you do when you howled at me and called what I said, high-handed selfishness. Words! Words! How often we mean alike and would know it but that we cloud our meanings!"

"I am living in the time of my growth when the love of father and mother and you and Mattee Sue are leading me toward the Great Light. You recall the time when you lived as a soul in the universal without differentiating it into the loves of father and mother and me and Ross Mevin,—"

"I don't love Ross Mevin," she burst out, her face aflame. "I never think of him except as an idea. Stop laughing! You'll tip us over!"

"It would do you good to be tipped over. Mellow up, the least bit, dear, the process does feel so good. I wager you wouldn't hear a man propose to you if your mind happened to be upon some theorem of the stars. You are absolutely blank to such matters as seeing a man looking in your direction when you are on your trip to the universal, and when you come back you would just as possibly put out your hand to the wrong fellow as you would take a lot of pains to get up a swell costume for a function, and then go to it with your hat on hind side before."

Agnes laughed.

"I don't always do that! Don't lay it up against me as the inevitable—"

"It isn't the usual that happens in choosing a man either—"

"Don't tease me, I am in agony! If I am to love God, through individuals, I must love those I have injured. I feel so distressed I am almost paralyzed at times, I cannot throw off the terrible weight of remorse at the part I have played in Philip Herman's life or the horrible obsession of his antagonism to me. I must sacrifice myself for him in some way,—give myself for him in vicarious atonement for the indignity I have made him suffer. What can I do!"

"Marry him and be his 'patience on a monument smiling at grief!'" burst out Tom, furiously. "Giving for him and giving to him are different propositions and I don't see why either should concern you. I am looking at you hard to find out if you have fallen in love with that seething hot bed of rampant pride."

"It is not rampant pride! I did a horrible thing to—"

"The newspapers did that!"

"I will not evade the blame. It was my *method* that gave them opportunity to place him on a saucer of huckleberries and hawk him to the world, and to connect his name with mine, as a common psychic,—"

"There, you have as much right to be angry with him as he with you,—it was the fault of neither."

"With an insulting innuendo as to the culmination of the romance in a manner amply making up for his fallen fortunes and uniting two families—it is disgusting and terrifying."

"Suggestion,—influence,—I thought you were superior to being spun like a top by the cord of public opinion."

"On the contrary, I know that is one of the weakest points of my character. I can be spun, and in my attempts to prevent this, I grow inert."

"How did you get hold of all that exposé? We kept the papers from you after the first one you saw."

"Grace Herrick didn't. She kept me fully supplied with literature from every source. If he didn't seem to despise me so,—I would be willing to—"

"Give the papers a chance to say,—I told you so! eh! Big headlines,—'Natural sequence which we foretold months ago! Consummation of romance between psychic and pauper in high life! Psychic and pauper! Pleasant alliterations!' he sneered, wrathfully. "How do you purpose consummating this union,—disintegration is a better word!—with a man who does you the superior honor of disliking you almost to the hating point!"

"Often I feel as if unseen forces were struggling for the integrity of my soul."

"They are; but they are natural forces of yourself and not spooks. Your inert—I won't say negative, for negative is as strong as positive—attitude of loving the whole universe without regard to relations, which your natural grit won't permit, will gain the victory for them. Doubt and fear are elemental forces. Do you intend to fall in love with them and let them rule you! Love neither compels nor makes demands. If what you feel within you does not coöperate with common sense, set it down as *not* love."

"Love cannot be the greatest thing in the world!"

"I like the thought of wisdom better. There seems more positiveness and less emotionalism in our understanding of it. It is better to keep the mind on that, Agnes, than on mischievous forces, seen or unseen. That is disintegrating."

"I know! It is our attitude which enables mischief or value to infill us. Fire is fire, be it preserver or destroyer."

"Never let yourself believe that you are listening to mischief-making intelligences of any sort. Did I

unintentionally hit the nail on the head! Are you in love with Philip Herman?"

"No, I only want to sacrifice myself for him in some way as reparation. I should like to place him rightfully before the world where I've debased him."

"On a pedestal! What sort of one? He, a god with feet of clay, on an altar of delusion! *Do you love him!*"

"No!"

"Does he show any signs of proposing?"

"No!" indignantly.

"How do you suggest cementing the matrimonial bond? Shall you make the advances yourself and compel him to accept you?"

"If it is my duty the way will be made plain."

Tom gasped.

"Duty! When you are in these moods of self-condemnation, the more one says, the more unmanageable you become. You would not dream of marrying on that false basis, would you!"

"I would do anything I thought I should, to rectify my mistake."

"We don't rectify mistakes by perpetrating others and you know it! You will do well to look into the ethics of marriage if you have any idea that you can go into it to restore self-respect, or pay debts, or for any other sort of vicarious atonement. You and I are not here—I am giving you your own philosophy when I say this—to rush into experiences of emotional sentimentalism, to learn, with blood-sweat and anguish the truth concealed in its horrors. We are here to prove that pure aspiration and trust, inherent selection, spiritual comprehension and apprehension, *do* prevent wreckage such as yours must be should you permit yourself to be drawn into horrible phenomena of experience, through the acceptance of any other

guides. For you, with your ideals, even to formulate such statements, astounds me! It proves how absolutely self-condemnation can disturb vision and make one see at all sorts of angles! Hasn't all your talk and all your thought taught you that Philip Herman must work out his salvation along with the rest of us;—and evidently, prefers to! You never can hear love speak while your heavenly vision is so constantly interrupted by little gnomes of doubt, fear and self-condemnation! You shall love, for the love of loving, the right man! I won't have any other kind and you shan't marry any other kind; and you shall gain some sort of perspective worthy your splendid powers—For a place with little current, our boats are moving swiftly,—where are we? ”

Instead of the wooded shores sloping to the water's edge, Agnes saw a well-kept green-sward, dotted here and there with superb hydrangeas and fall cannæ, set back from the water amidst vines and trees. A man, a woman, and some frightened children were trying to attract the attention of the two in the boats, beneath which the water swirled more and more rapidly, while louder grew the sounds heretofore unnoticed, mingled, as these had been, with the sougling of trees, splashing of water and the intensity of their emotions.

“The gates! The gates!” she cried, “Oh, Tom, the gates!”

The lake was one of a chain on which demand was made when the water-supply ran low in the neighboring city. The gates were up to-night, letting their floods through, insidiously sucking to their death those two bright lives; swirling, eddying, faster and faster, while the steady boom grew more and more insistent.

In a flash, Agnes grasped the situation. She saw they could be saved if they worked together—but there were the two boats! She knew Tom would not drop

the rope that connected these, though the holding lead him to his death! Should she row, or be still! Her efforts would prove worse than useless unless she moved in rhythm with his. If she could depend on her strength for one hundred and fifty yards, they would pass the danger line and Tom could manage the rest. One hundred and fifty yards against those swirling waters, in time to the stroke of a college crew!

In the midst of this turbulence of mind, thundering through the sounding waters came the message to her soul,—“I and my Father are one!” In that second, strength supernal and vision for doing came to her. Bending to the stroke, she recovered in perfect rhythm with Tom and for the moment their dizzying onrush was checked. Little by little they gained control over the almost flying boats and skillfully made the turn in the vortex of waters. Again and again she bent and recovered, struggling for life against death with the Lorelei singing in the rushing waters. Inch by inch they forced themselves away from the seething, eddying swirl that threatened to engulf them.

Again she bent and recovered. They moved on while the group on the water's edge, added to the turbulence by their shouts of direction and encouragement. All grew black before her. The air seemed full of flecks of fire, dipping and flashing. The danger signal danced dizzily in the mist rapidly gathering before her eyes. She was almost losing sight of Tom, but the closeness of their spirits grew more assured. They had walked together, talked together, rowed together—a little—but most of all, they had *thought* together. There was nothing impersonal in her attitude towards him—he need not be afraid! Though her eyes could scarcely see him through the fire-flecked darkness, still she moved with him. Rhythmically bending

and recovering, she dipped her sparkling oars, whose blades dripped molten silver. Rather than seeing in the darkness that had gathered about her outward vision, she seemed, inwardly, full of light. She knew that a black pole shot past them; she knew, rather than heard, enthusiastic cheers from the gate-keeper and the lusty-throated children; she knew that Tom was calling to her to stop rowing, and she knew that steadily she was helping pull themselves away from the keeper's lodge, away from the sounding, shivering, swirling waters, back into the quiet lake.

The two said almost nothing as they landed. When the boats were housed, they turned towards home.

"I won't walk up the road with you," Tom said. "Sister Frisby eyed me as if I were a plucked cupid and it won't do to include you in such a covey."

When she had left him, he walked sturdily into the woods.

"Coroner's verdict: 'Drowned by dispensation of Providence,'" he said grimly, as he stood still beneath the trees, alone with *himself*. "Verdict of the Great Knower:—'Tom Landell chose to grow angry over the problems of life so inhibiting his mind's activities that he did not coöperate with inherent intelligence and was swept into danger currents.' Drowned by the dispensation of Providence! Pouf! We should have been drowned by the dispensation of unconscious choice."

CHAPTER XXIX.

Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

Peter I. i. 11.

THAT night Agnes went to her room; but not to sleep. Sitting in darkness, enveloping her in mysterious folds, she looked into the seeming void that gave no evidence of the landscape within and behind its shadows. She knew it was there, even as she knew that under the denseness of her superficial mind, stood her soul, alight. As she sat there, her consciousness began to feel its way through the opaqueness and she sensed the forest in misty chiaroscuro, and the moonlight glancing upon the lake in flecks and falls as narrow as lances and as keen. Excepting for the low monotone of the waters rushing through the far-away gates, so intense a stillness filled the night it became like a palpable pulsing entity.

Little by little, her consciousness differentiated and translated these mysteries behind the veil of nature. There stole into the recognition of her hearing a sound as of bullets striking steel. Sight pierced the lower clouds and mounted to where black cumuli piled high along a more distant horizon though toward the zenith the concave heights were clear and blue. A breath of vitalizing air sent a message to her nostrils of the mountains beyond sight, and her whole sense-being reached out to welcome the rain. She knew that drops were

falling upon the leaves, and the sound echoed to her from the forest; she felt them touch the soft green moss and followed them as they leaped into the brooks; they spattered upon the lichen-dashed rocks and she bounded in spirit with them as they ricocheted on the grass; they touched the pebbles and her heart moved as if it were itself the very heart of the ferns; they entered, like life-giving elixir, into the dying brakes, and, with them, she felt their vitalizing, potent energy.

She knelt by the window and leaned her arms upon the sill, letting the drops dash in upon her face as she drew deep breaths of enlightenment and inspiration. The shower was sharp and short. The battalions of rain-drops surged across the lake, echoed in the distance, then died away, still leaving the landscape enveiled in brume.

A surge of desolation and apartness unfelt for months, swept over her.

"I, not see the personal!" She dropped her head upon her arms. "It is what I do see! Night after night I hold the forms of the little sisters and brothers who died long ago. I suffer, even now, in the sufferings they have transcended! And Aunt Luella! Why did I not respond to the call of her heart! It was because I was trying to rise above the psychic and analyze the divine currents of the universe!

"I wish I knew. I do feel that I am gaining in consciousness of intuition. I am beginning to recognize the passivity which admits the drift of flotsam and jetsam toward my mentality,—absolutely sucks it in as into a vortex of confusion. There is a fierceness in my attitude as I sense the coming, a resentment that I should be intruded upon. Training will enable me to act intuitionally, on the instant, concerning truths to which reason leads us slowly.

"Have I been wrong!" She kept the question surg-

ing through her mind. "If I am personal, I am accused of being impersonal; if I try to be impersonal, I am accused of 'high-handed selfishness'! I *will* see humanity only as instruments and will ignore personality and personal friendships. I will crucify personal love and ignore lovers."

Leaning far out of the window, she looked into the all-pervading mist. Suddenly it became a surging, billowing sea.

"Look deeper still into the pains and sorrows," it seemed to say to her heart, "you have not probed the depths when you stop at the thought of pain. The power and the glory are underneath the suffering. Ignoring—that will never help you find them. Search the heart of pain and you shall find help, service, co-operation."

"God, teach me!" she cried. "Ever since I was a little child I have sought—but I do not find."

"Learn!"

The word came from within—an impression as distinct as a speaking voice. A faint light penetrated the mist. As she watched, the full moon appeared in a clear sky. Below her, not a church steeple, not a hill crest were visible.

"I am above the clouds!" She gazed from the elevation of her windows, veering, as she often did—filled now, with an ecstasy of delight. "Just you and I, dear moon, are up here in the open. If only, I could always be above the fog! Oh, I am so unutterably lonely."

Again, she dropped her head upon the sill. The complications of her life regarding Philip Herman seemed but one of a thousand struggling, with human intensity, for settlement.

"God, teach me!"

"Learn," again came the command within her.

"Every travail of desolation gives birth to higher understanding, doubtless; but after travail comes expression. Is that true!" she challenged herself. "Does not the travail of desolation give birth to desolation! Of course it does. It is the conception of Light that leads to the birth of light within our souls and in our activities. If our light is dim our expression is not clearly defined.

"I make myself a centre of God's Light. I hold still in Thee, O Great Creative Power. From thy central station, use me as distributing force," she prayed. "That Light of Thine, I hold in my heart for the help of Philip Herman. I am not the maker of his destinies. Thou art the Master-BUILDER, he is the mason of his life. I bless it to the universal purposes of his being."

A rare quiet succeeded this expression of the soul. No longer forming questions or preparing answers, she lived in spirit.

She sat in heavenly stillness. The turbulence of longing—the attitude of seeking—slowly yielded to the one of having—the peace that passeth understanding. The tangle of thought unraveled slowly, directed in peace from and toward the Great Centre. She knew the currents were flowing to her and from her with the strength of the Central Power. A faith enfolded her; a trust directed her. She saw not the facts that might arise upon her path; but she lived in the assurance that the principle of Universal Unity will surely evolve in universal good."

"Where is Ross Mevin?"

This question, clear and incisive, borne to her on the currents her peace was allowing to flow to her, was repeated.

"Why think of him!" she said, irritably, disturbed at being moved from out the state of heavenly satis-

faction. "My desire to learn relates to spiritual matters, not to Ross Mevin."

"No man cometh to the Father but by Me," sang through her heart. "That means the universal spirit found in humanity," she returned, aloud, and cavalierly sought to turn her lesson after the trend of what seemed her own liking; but, as always the case, when mighty currents are set in motion, they sweep the individual understanding toward the sea of enlightenment. Thrice came the question,

"Where is Ross Mevin?"

"A strange response to my giving up of self! I promised myself to God and not to man."

"Where does one end and the other begin! Has any one ever found the dividing line?"

"To humanity, then, and not the individual."

"Who knows of humanity, excepting through the individual. No man cometh to the Father but by Me. Jesus dealt in personality. His work was with the individual. He taught universal truths by means of the single one. He came to earth the expression of universal truth through the activities of the individual. He gave us the right of selection and fitted each to each. But how shall we learn whom we can serve and who shall serve us!"

"Through love, learn!"

The command was more definite than an articulate utterance. She answered in enunciated words.

"He has never given me sign that he considers me his destiny."

As she said this Tom's words of the afternoon rang in her heart,—“You never can hear love speak, your heart is so beset with fear and self-condemnation.”

She sprang up, appalled.

"What is this knowledge struggling within me!"

she cried. "This vision of a drive in the sunset; this rhapsody of infilling joy!"

She recalled every step of her companionship with Mevin from the moment of meeting him, the gradual slipping into friendliness of conventional sort. The light across the fields from his window flashed into remembrance; his rescue at her hands, his comfort, like balm upon her wounded heart and frightened mind—all the soul communion which she never—such stupidity!—had realized to be other than simple comradeship; the night of his departure—his words, which she had heard but not interpreted, the sense of abiding sweetness and rest she had known when with him, but had not translated,—oh, the blindness of it all! Tears burned behind her eyeballs for very shame that she who could read between lines should see nothing in the lines themselves! The sorrowful mystery of her life was revealed through this lightning blast upon her heart!

"I have cried for love and it has been wooing me for many days! How many messages have I failed to hear because I have held my own concept of my incapacity ever before my mind!"

She paced to and fro in the room. From the retrospection of her life entire, her mind reverted ever and again to Ross Mevin. Here was a blindness that seemed the climaxing folly and disaster of all.

"I must be impersonal!" she said, over and over within herself.

Again she went to the window. The mist had cleared. Down, down, far below what she had seen before, was life,—the life of the village.

"Look deep," said the teacher. "Look deep and learn."

She sat long and silent, dreaming of the life below

her. As she turned away, she touched a table piled high with books. The jar sent them careening to the floor. She caught them in her arms, a book came open to her hands. She looked at the page.

“ ‘Marriage,’ ” she read, “ ‘is a revelation to spiritual consciousness of the union between the universal and the individual idea. It leads more completely than any other one relation to the understanding of the ideal.’ ” She paraphrased this, as her eyes fell on the words in the book, “ Agnes, you are making life a series of practices, exercises and definitions, instead of *living the life*. Your whole existence is a substitution. You live for others, bleed for others! You need to live the very self of very self. Would a marriage with Philip Herman in substitution for a debt, or your marriage with any man other than Ross Mevin translate unity to you! Can you learn otherwise, that only the ascent to the highest heights of the impersonal can teach you the lesson of the personal or translate unity to you! ”

She closed her eyes and prayed. The sense of captivity grew more insistent. She saw chains which she had but felt before.

“ You are under the law,” came a voice far, far, within her consciousness. “ It is the law of growth. No abstract love; but its concrete expression in the various relations of life, alone can set you free.”

Again she looked from the window. The lights in the village homes twinkled lovingly; the voices of playing children floated to her; the earth sent sweet aroma to her nostrils; the air was full of friendliness; the water sent messages of comradeship, as the moonbeams played radiantly upon its surface; the low fire which took the chill from her room this soft fall night sang to her in tones of comradeship; the interchange-

able relationship of all creation, helped and helpers, spoke to her.

“God, expressed in humanity,—in human loves, in human relations.” With illumined face she looked into the heavens and down on to the earth. “I may express my own heart! It is best! It is right!”

CHAPTER XXX.

*"I thought I'd vanquished mighty love
But find myself deceived;
For every hour, alas! I prove
The conquest unachieved."*

AGNES fell asleep and woke just in time to prepare for breakfast. As, filled with the exaltation the revealment of the night before had brought to her understanding, she took her seat at table, her father handed her an envelope, at the same time opening a similar one of his own. Her heart was singing, for love was showing her the world as never before. She felt such happiness speaking from her eyes that she studiously kept them on her plate, lest her secret be disclosed.

"These are attractive invitations," Mr. Landell was saying, "Mevin is a fine fellow. He deserves the best life can give. I hope he will be very happy."

Agnes' hand lost its hold upon the missive which she had not opened. It dropped to the table where she let it lie.

"Yes," she said faintly, "I hope that for every one I know."

"Such a man is sure to make a wise choice in life. It is born in him."

"When is it to be?" Agnes battled with a strange darkness that enveloped her.

"I haven't looked at the date,—oh, yes, the tenth."

"Aren't you going to open yours?" said her mother.

"Any time will do. I suppose they are all the

same." Nervously she fingered her roll. She felt as if she should swoon.

Mr. Landell, apparently unaware of his daughter's perturbation, did not raise his eyes from the announcement.

"I think Hardocker does the best work of this sort in the country, don't you, Helen? He always engraves well and this is especially pleasing."

"With an effort of will Agnes picked up her envelope, and half rose from the table.

"I must go. At last Hi-Timmy has money to buy the satin for Amy's roses. I am to take both children to Boston, this morning, and we are to select it together."

Her remarks concluded in a strangle from which she strove to recover by speedy recourse to a glass of water.

"What shall we say to these invitations?" Mr. Landell's persistence was rather unusual.

"I should like to go," was Mrs. Landell's response. "We have not been away this fall and it will be a pleasant trip."

"I believe I won't go," said Agnes, promptly. "Excuse me, mother, I will get ready for the trip to town."

"Oh, the travesty of expecting any benefits from personal love!" she sobbed inwardly, as, with the door closing behind her, she struggled with her emotions. "My love! My love! I awaked last night to the joy of loving you,—too late, too late!"

Hunting up Hi-Timmy and telephoning Amy not to be late for the train helped her to regain composure and forget herself in the children's joy. Their delight and the sense of self-respect that the attainment of the end in view had given Hi-Timmy, were an interesting study to her. She watched, with interest, the little air of importance with which Amy settled back in the

seat of the car when they had really started and the wheels were making that lovely bumpy feeling under them, that made you know you were truly traveling.

"Where shall we go for the satin? Have you any special place you prefer, Amy?"

"Yes, Miss Landell," Amy was all aquiver with excitement, "I think the best stock of silks in the whole city is at Quirkle & Quake's."

Her manner was so wholly like her mother's that Agnes could not help being amused, though a shudder ran through her as she realized that the day's shopping lay, not in the cool and restful select shops of her choice, but in the hustling department stores downtown. At first she thought of urging her own preference; but finally decided to be led by the children, whose delight grew with each added responsibility.

Once in the unaccustomed land of purchases, Agnes' acute heartache was submerged in the joy of the children, though always, the dirge, *too late!* sighed through the laughter and chatter. Under the exhilaration of their enthusiasm the expedition proved nearly as interesting to herself as to them. The silks were spread upon the counters in a profusion of colors that made Amy almost hysterical with joy; and her first decision, for blue, swerved for a while. She alternated in hanging rapturously over them in silent admiration, and pirouetting about excitedly, her mind as active as her feet, her fancy playing in and out in "sweet delay of choice."

Hi-Timmy stood more silent, as to his feet, and less expressive, as to words, but in equal quandary as to choice. He had not cared very much for one color, over and above any other, but when Agnes told him they were made of the same *something* as sound,—an eternal something that is always back of everything, and recalled to him what Tom had said in the labora-

tory that first afternoon, now almost *long* ago, when he had received intimation that he was a vital member in a household of harmony; and lingered on what Tom had said about color and music being interchangeable, he was almost overwhelmed with the wonder of it. It made him more silent, but very much more happy. He did not recall Tom's statement, in one sense, but in another, he did; for, without consciously realizing it, he had been drawing the thought, as an elixir, into his very existence.

"When I get my violin, I will show you these colors, Amy," he whispered in a shy aside, "buy that one over there."

But Amy, with a sigh at having to relinquish all the other beautiful flashes of radiance, decided, after all, on the blue.

"Are you taking lessons, now?" asked Agnes, while they were waiting for the material to be wrapped up.

"No'm, I can't afford it. I only took enough to make my other roses. That is why I felt so 'specially bad about their being spoiled. I didn't know how to make any more."

"Didn't your teacher show you how?"

"No'm, she did them for me mostly,—I sorter helped."

"Let me teach you how to do them by yourself,—"

"I guess Miss Cherry will be glad enough to get me back, if only for a few lessons," went on the child, reflectively, in the pursuit of her own thought, not hearing Agnes' words, "she's dreadful poor. She will give me six lessons for two dollars."

Agnes did not complete her sentence, halted before a lesson many a woman with a competence must learn—that the acceptance of her offer would mean taking bread and butter from one who needs it. She must adopt other methods of teaching color and nature

to the children towards whom her heart was reaching out and warming strangely, as the great love was withdrawn from her at the very moment she had absolutely and completely realized its existence and its compelling influence in her life. She sighed, then smiled bravely, through unshed tears.

"Next, we will go to the violin maker's," she said, after the wonderful blue satin had been presented to Amy by the happy Hi-Timmy Tidmouse, who proudly tucked into his pocket twenty-nine cents in change, his gallant offer to spend the same in cheap candy having been skilfully waived by Agnes, who promised to go, later in the afternoon, to a little candy kitchen, where you could see candy made out of the purest of materials, while you wait.

"The violin-maker is a marvelous man," she counselled, as they climbed the steep stairs to the quaint old shop, "perhaps he will explain how sound induces forms of entrancing beauty and tell us what I suggested to you at the silk counter,—about color and sound, and about the great and beautiful truth that every wood has a voice of its own."

The violin-maker was very kind. He loved little people and he loved violins. His time did not represent, to him, money alone; but sweetness and beauty and rhythm and ideals. Glad enough was he to talk with those who appreciated the worth of ideals and wanted to learn about them.

"The desire to associate sounds and trace an idea through that medium, as you explain to me, he loves to do, Fraulein," said the dear old German, as they stood apart while the children were delightedly roaming undisturbed about the workshop, "would indicate that the making of instruments, rather than the making of music upon them through musicianship, composition or instrumentation will be his activity.

"Alexander," he turned to Hi-Timmy, "what would you think of my teaching you to mend your violin? There will be much of pleasure in your knowing the very heart and spirit of your instrument, and mending it and learning to make others will give you very much of happiness."

"I should like it," said Timmy, shyly, yet positively. So it was planned that, if Dr. Wehr approved, he should go to the violin-maker at stated periods, and if he showed any aptitude for the work, should become a maker of violins.

Then the master showed his interested visitors different sorts of woods, as Agnes had hoped he would. He spoke of varying qualities of sound produced according to the kinds and thicknesses of the woods, and called to their attention the rhythms of different lengths and qualities of string. His mind was filled with rich, deep philosophy, and his heart full of joy at their interest. As he showed them these wonders, latent in wood and string, he hinted—only hinted—in such manner as to stimulate their desire for knowledge—of the lives of the great ones, who expressed in sound the ideals of their souls. He told them tales of Ole Bull, the wandering Paganini, the Amati, and of the Stradivarii who made violins to the glory of God;—sent all this to join other memories in their minds, thus picturing indelibly, qualities of aspiration, embodied in thought and deed—the secret of inspired lives.

"I shall withhold the completion of the repairs," he said aside, to Agnes, as the children were trying to synchronize the pitch of a tuning fork with that of the big 'cello. "Motion, form and color areas shall have attention in the making of cell and tissue until the impressions have begun to reflect, in manifold activity of those functions the sounding of the iron

string of self-reliance and the perfectly tuned string of joy. You see, Fraulein," with a winning gesture of his handsome head, "it is only by way of becoming a little child that one enters the kingdom of heaven. So, true it is, that if the boy comes to me to learn, he shall, each day, listen for the Key Note, to see if he lives true to It, even as now, he is listening to the tuning fork to see if the 'cello accords with it."

When they had started for home, Agnes felt the desolation the excitement of the afternoon had, in a sense, submerged, coming to the surface again. She bade the children good-bye, and entering the house went at once to the great organ. Seating herself upon the bench, she filled the rooms with sound, through which a strange cry insistently penetrated.

"The travesty of love! The tragedy of love! A constant sacrifice! A constant crucifixion! I renounce humanity!" She pulled out the diapason and poured forth her agony in the waves of sound. "*I go away! I send the Comforter,*" she quoted. "The deeper the tragedy, the heart-break, the desolation, of that we must renounce—the touch of the hand, the smile, the pressure of tender lips against these lips that breathe and burn love into the soul—the more scorching the flame that desolates that soul from valley to hill-top—the more space of spirit for the Comforter to fill; the more absolute the renunciation; the more absolutely the Great Impersonality of the Universal infills us. I renounce the personal! I renounce it! Renounce it! Life is a constant crucifixion! My Jesus is still a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief! I must mount the universal cross and suffer even as He has suffered. His was a life of constant sacrifice. He placed His life where it would bless, not where it would bring Him pleasure! That is to be truly unselfish! If this newly-found love of mine is taken

from me it must be to lead me into paths of helpfulness and self-abnegation. What is there in my life for which I must atone! I have ruined Philip Herman's self-respect before the world! I see more and more plainly that I am to devote myself to restoring it, to honoring it; to supporting it in its worldly needs and spiritual leadings."

So dissonance of mind and of instrumentation resolved into dissonance, slowly and intricately moving toward consonance, as she wandered about in the blindness that enveloped her. The chords cried forth her agony and died in a wail of discord; the pedals quivered as they were trampled beneath the feet that struggled to bear the burden of her weight away from this sounding board of her despair to the seclusion of her room. She stumbled up-stairs with a plea of exhaustion to her mother, who, puzzled and concerned, passed her at the turn in the hall.

"I don't see what you base your conclusions on—that Agnes is in love with Ross Mevin," she said, seeking her husband. "She has been making as many discords on the organ as she does in her love-making and now has gone to her room with such utter abandonment of all life's joys on her face that I don't know whether to follow her or not! It is a most lamentable thing to be imbued with the idea that holy living means seeking the unpleasant and miserable for oneself! I wish she could learn better! Talk to me now about this dreadful Herman chimera she has in her brain and try to encourage me about Mevin!"

"I consider the affair a most interesting psychological study!" returned Mr. Landell, a happy light in his beautiful eyes.

"You are an inhuman father!" Lovingly, Mrs. Landell ruffled her husband's hair, as she often did,

when she liked and, at the same time, was teased by him.

"A remarkable psychological study," he repeated. "They who say, 'Sally, will you marry me?' and, 'Yes, John, I will,' are elementary, Helen. These two are complex."

"I suspect the Sallies and the Johnnies have far less troublous times."

"I do not know about that! If you and I were absolutely sure there was nothing more in either of us to unfold, we might tire of each other. You are full of surprises to me and I suspect I am a Chinese puzzle to you!"

"Why is it that persons like Agnes and Mevin, whom the Lord simply made for each other, haven't the slightest idea of love-making! Agnes seems so wise she appals me, yet lacks knowledge in so many things the average schoolgirl seems quite assured of! I wish she would stop this incessant puzzling over every passing event. It is unnatural for a woman not to know when a man is in love with her and to ignore her very counterpart—if there is such a thing—"

"I do not fear! Let her 'lie in the lap of the great Intelligence!' The Universal Mother has a broader vision than the little mother, dear and wise though she be!"

"I want her to live more outside of herself,—to go about among people."

"She is doing that in her own way."

"She used to be active in so many directions—"

"Now she accomplishes more than ever before, but is conserving her forces. She is responding with discretion to demands—no longer permits herself to be indiscriminately at the beck and call of others—"

"She is losing her friends—"

"To find them again in the finding of herself."

"She has almost entirely dropped her music."

"To study, in the very heart of its making, the divine principles of its expression."

"She is held, alternately, in attacks of exaltation and depression—"

"Less than for years."

"For a woman of her reserve she is at times strangely communicative of her mental processes. She loses her sense of proportion—"

"To find it in the same Mind which is in the Christ, Helen, Agnes is not studying herself. Therein, you and many others misunderstand her and her type. She is studying processes through available channels. She is as much an impersonal subject as if no part of herself. What seems self-consciousness is lack of self-consciousness, as she reaches out for universal consciousness. Though her questionings are suggested by contact with the world, her answers come from the inner places of the Most High. She is conscious of states crude minds do not know exist, or else allow themselves to be dominated by. Soon, she will deliberately make up her mind to forget what has served its purpose in the making of character. She has been in the period of remembering; but, for the initiate, there is the period of forgetting, as well. She feels the presence of other entities and her mind responds to such an extent that she is actually surrounded by a cloud of witnesses. Like all great souls, she constantly assumes the burdens of the race. Now she is learning that one may not do this and thus deprive others of the right to work out their own salvation."

"Unprincipled men seem to know so much better how to attain their ends than honest ones who accord the right of the individual. Did you ever really consider, Daniel, that a girl of eighteen must fence with pastmasters of diplomacy well acquainted with the art

of making love; must treat all with kindness; retain their friendship; in no way rouse antagonism or enmity by repressing natural expression, or compromise character or reputation by permitting it. Ignorance or lack of judgment affords no excuse. Wholly uninformed she must dominate the emotions awakened by the magnetic personalities of the good men, and their desire-impelling influence, or the chloroforming machinations of the bad. She is supposed to make her life choice with a view both to moral and worldly considerations; as a matter of course, to distinguish between spiritual power and physical attraction—which men and women of maturity often cannot do. She is supposed to select true love with all its concomitants, and bring it to capitulation. Commanders-in-chief of the armies of the world are called upon to do little more."

"So it will be while mankind magnifies sex instead of realizing that it is but one of millions of expressions of creative power. Every day, I realize more clearly the ideal embodied in the Immaculate Conception. Struggling into consciousness, through the stages of cell-attraction; awareness; of instinct; of uncontrolled, inordinate desire; of legitimized lust; of religious symbolism; into that of controlled, emotional utilization of creative power, life has not known how to comprehend its next attainment—'the foreshadowing of Holy Spirit.' It has needed just men, like Joseph, to protect the Ideal. To-day, men and women are learning that women must be overshadowed by Holy Spirit, which shall say, 'conceive and bear a child'—whether embodied as a being or a deed—before she can rightfully receive man's executive action, also overshadowed by Holy Spirit. Helen, we are rising out of a religion of feeling; of a physical heaven or hell; of promises of sensuous bliss; even the delights of mental visioning, into the spiritual teachings of the Christ."

CHAPTER XXXI.

"But this much has been revealed to us in the new Light of Life, that it is not the cold 'mental' affirmation that brings health to the bones and watering to the marrow. It is the soul-joy, the heart-satisfaction,—it is Love, expressed in the Life that does this."

THAT night, the name of Ross Mevin rang persistently in Agnes' ears. As never before, she realized that in her strained, puzzled, mental search for truth, she herself had been withholder of the vision and the illumination. So often brave in the emergencies of life, of which there had been many; so often straining to see and follow God's will, this night she gave way, as never before, to the heart-break of her despair. She loved Ross Mevin! Loved him! How could she give him up! She could feel the touch of his hand as he helped her across the roadway; she looked into the dark, to see shining therefrom, his eyes, gazing deeply into her own, mutely asking in a language she should have understood for her love which she had withheld. She heard his voice rich with character and vibrant with emotion appealing for her heart, while she bestowed upon him the stone of her intellect! A wave of humiliation swept over her as she realized that she was now appropriating to herself a gift he no longer offered to her but was bestowing on another. Aside from the broken-heartedness of it all there was an anti-climax about it that humiliated her. It was beyond endurance, and increased, a thousand-fold, the torture of a heart alive and bleeding with its loss. Her fancy

played in the galleries of her mind until it gathered feature and form for a photograph of the woman who had recognized the value of the soul she had cast aside. A passion, new to her, clutched her, and, horror-stricken, she knew it to be hate. It rose in her as the vaporous steam, rising from simmering water, fills the vessel and suffocates the victim in the boiling vat. She strangled as she fought against the desire to kill,—to kill the one who held the place she felt was hers and hers alone.

After long hours, her inherent integrity slowly asserted itself. Like dawn stealing over the mountain tops, spiritual light flowed slowly in, transmuting the venom of hate, and softly but surely illumining the darkness of her emotions. Wavering, pulsing, as when the light first sends its penetrating presence into the great dark to mold and shape figures and forms of beauty and of helpfulness, just by possessing space, so, inoculating the heartache with resignation, came the knowledge, as never before, that there had been One upon earth who, through His sorrows, understood what she might know of sorrow. He suffered; she would suffer. He came only that she and those like her might learn the lesson of renunciation.

Long she lay submerged in her atmosphere of subordination. Suddenly, she shook off this supineness and took on the armor of courage. What had Jesus meant when He said 'Follow Me!' Surely, not to remain on the cross where misunderstanding had crucified Him! It was to follow Him to realms of transfiguration! Life must flow more and more wisely into new understandings and beautiful experiences, wholly unlike the tragic, tinselly expressions of aborted thought. Was not this the lesson that Jesus could not teach the multitude, nay, not even the disciples,—because not until one has reached the heights

of Impersonality, can one understand the intense message of personality,—of the individual! Was this the very secret she had been striving to struggle away from,—the truth, that the loving of the individual in all different relationships, is, step by step, entrance into the holy of holies of the Universal, and that it is this loving, as well as the being loved, that raises man to the supernal realms of life!

She lay back, exhausted, on the pillows. Little by little a tender benediction overshadowed her. Her mind left her own problems. Her heart dwelt on the Jesus, whose life, as she saw it in the light of this revelation, was like the life of every man; temptation following every new plane of attainment; isolation following every new phase of growth; rejection by men following the discernment of each truth in the chain of All-Truth. So, in her life, each step forward had been succeeded by new heart-breaking ordeals. Through His life, she followed mankind, at every turn in its career,—years of preparation, of testing ideals, days of triumph, of failure and despair, even as His brothers have striven since the world began.

She recalled the culmination of one phase of His life, when, at thirty, He had unfolded from the disciple to a Christ, as is possible for all daughters and sons of God. Where lesser ones have seemed to lie buried in their own ruins, He proved His possibilities and lifted a seeming failure into a redeeming lesson for the ages. He saved men from a low conception of their inherent selves; He dissipated the idea of separation from the Father; He revealed the inheritance of their power through oneness of substance—quality—with their Origin. The narrowness of life as limited by a human embodiment fell from her as she lay there. She saw that the "Christ of the human heart, is, for the most part, Jesus, seen in the mystic human

Christ, struggling, suffering, dying, finally triumphant, the *Man* in whom humanity is seen, crucified and risen; whose victory is a promise of victory to every one who like Him, is faithful unto death,—and beyond,—The Christ, who never can be forgotten, while He is born again and again in humanity; while the world needs saviours and saviours give themselves for men."

She saw this God-Man spring out of the darkness, strong to help His brother, able to pour His life into every struggling soul.

"Courage, brothers," she heard Him say, "I, Jesus, Man-God, have trod the way before you. I have proved that it can be trod. I have shown, by my example, that you and I are one in God. I have done nothing different from many and many of you; I have gone on, out of your physical sight and present understanding as you do, every day, to those about you, as you grow. This must give you courage when you seem to lose those about you, and, yourself, seem to be lost. It will prove what I am striving, still, to teach you, that we have no right to force any manifestation, through indiscriminate bestowal of life-essence and purpose, in any direction of self-depletion, or self-immolation upon the altar of a semi-ideal. Only that idea is complete which leads to life of, not to death of self. I live on, as do you, without let or pause; but few there be who see Me, few there be who know Me."

She sat up in bed and threw back her beautiful hair with an attitude new to her who had sought, so constantly, to renounce all.

"I give myself as never before," she said aloud, "I save myself for the service of mankind in just and righteous exchange, not squandering, unconstructively. I have sat at the foot of the Cross; I have taken Jesus down and mounted it myself; what helpful exchange

in that! None! I will fix my eyes on Him as a radiant, luminous Ideal, where once I saw a cross suspended in the air; but, now, with the cross faded quite away and as one apart, I will minister to and realize the Universal, through mankind."

Her mind was full of this expression of God in the individual, when she went to the dining-room the next morning. The newly-acquired understanding of Unity had given to her bearing a quality of coherence that, notwithstanding its former nobility it had never possessed. The forehead, almost massively masculine, that always had seemed at war with the tenderness of the delicate chin, was won into copartnership by the eyes that spoke a new message and called the chin forward and upward to send it on its way. The child-like simplicity was more clearly marked than ever on the beautifully rounded cheek and the curve toward the exquisitely dimpled indentures below the lower lip. The lips, moulded with the purity of thought of one who from babyhood had moved them, always, in life and thought, in the utterance, "Our Father," had gained, in the night, a strength that but added to their beauty as she realized and spoke of Him, now, as no abstract principle but as the Living God. Her voice was vibrant with new resolve as she passed the good mornings, then seated herself.

"Father," she said, "what relation has fact to principle?"

"Fact is transitory expressing of an Eternal Idea. Principle is the fount whence flow many streams, merging, lost and found in constantly changing forms and relations. The fact as we see it, tabulates our consciousness of principle. The longer I live," thoughtfully Mr. Landell laid down his knife and fork, "the more convinced I am that it is truth, not experience,

which teaches. We need not impel unfortunate incidents into expression for the sake of learning the lessons they embody. An intelligent insight into principle will lead into ways of pleasantness and paths of peace. Every bit of wisdom, of influence, of contact in higher spheres, is experience, rather than the external demonstration of an unhappy life, a tragedy of unlicensed passion, the slime of the divorce court, the ignominy of a blasted progeny."

"We do expect to follow a map of some sort, or, at least, mile-posts in going from here to Worcester, don't we," said Tom. "But in the affairs of life we seem willing to follow all sorts of blind alleys, hit or miss."

"Yes, and if, in sheer despair, we finally charter intelligence to guide us to the highway, some claim that experience has been the guide, meaning the untoward incidents to which blindness to the teachings of principle has led us. On the contrary, the waste of energy delayed the pilgrim on the way."

"True," said Tom, "the child stumbles in learning to walk; but when he coördinates right processes with right instruments, and uses his motor centres to a definite and desired end for the best direction and use of his activities, he is led, logically, to the goal of his intent,—"

"Not because he strengthened his muscles by tumbles and mistakes; but because he is systematically applying the law of locomotion. I do not say that we do not trace truth through events, I say truth is the teacher. If you wish me to believe to the contrary, prove that two and two are four by continuing to pay five dollars for two two-dollar theatre tickets."

"That is easy," laughed Mrs. Landell. "It is by coming to the limit of the theatre allowance before the close of the season."

"It does not even teach that, specifically; it takes knowledge that two and two are four to enable us to discover why the money hasn't held out," said Mr. Landell, in repartee.

"I'd be willing to take a few whacks at experience, even on the basis of its meaning what happens to us," said Tom, a glint of fire in his eye, "my life has been so dully prosaic,—everything coming straight to my hand. Either I was born with the golden spoon of spiritual heredity, or I have been fairly successful in well-directed, conscious choice. I should really like an experience that is a *happen*, or a direct outcome of an unwise, undirected, or misdirected choice—"

"Oh, Tom!" An expression of torture passed swiftly over his father's face, which, flitting out as quickly as it came, gave way to his natural calm. "As you wish, it shall be given you," he concluded.

"Honestly, I should like to test myself in other than the manner that is usual to me. I may be imagining I am free from weaknesses and the taint of external mistakes, because of my directed activity. That may not be so,—"

"We need not lay traps nor dig pitfalls for our feet."

"Follow your own advice which is saving me from a demonstration of tragedy," Agnes caught up her brother's words with the same intensity that her father had done; but without his prompt return to tranquillity. "I am going to repeat your words to you,—"

"'You and I are here to *prove* that pure aspiration and trust, inherent selection, spiritual comprehension and apprehension *do prevent* wreckage of life such as yours must be, should you permit yourself to be drawn into horrible phenomena of experience through the acceptance of any other guides.'"

There was a moment of thoughtful silence, then Mr. Landell said,

"What shall we do about these invitations of Mevin's? I think your mother and I will accept. His father was my chum at college and I should like to see him on his way."

"Let's all go," urged Tom.

"Oh, no!" Agnes' exclamation came like a cry of pain, which she covered quickly. "I really couldn't! I have no suitable gown."

"A woman always makes that excuse," scoffed Tom. "Get one!"

"I am in no mood to stand for hours, this divine weather, planning a wedding-reception gown," Agnes replied, and a line of gray traced itself about her trembling lips.

Mr. Landell studiously regarded his plate; but her mother looked at her with a quick glance of relief and satisfaction.

"You always do leap chasms in your conversation, Agnes, and it takes an alert mind to follow you. I confess I cannot trace the relation between weddings and these invitations to the dedication of a memorial building,—what is it dear!" for Agnes had reeled and would have fallen from her chair if her father had not reached out and caught her.

"Just a passing faintness," said Agnes, bravely. "Tell me about all this. I quite neglected to open my envelope yesterday, and know nothing about it."

Her pride forbade her capitulating before the family, so she wrote formal regrets to the invitation and put the envelope in the mail pouch, locking it with a reluctant click.

"I am sorry we are not going to Mevin's," said Tom, the next time he met her. "I think I should be tempted if I had not promised Cousin Matilda to see

her off to the town for the winter and stay there over night to protect the silver and other valuables she refuses to send to the bank. Nothing would induce her to delay or advance by one hour the time of her departure. She sails out at a submarine hour of the morning, so I am to go there the day father and mother leave. It takes days to shut up the house to suit Cousin Matilda. It's a pity you sent regrets. You would enjoy seeing what a fine pottery Mevin is making with his talents."

"What do you mean?" puzzled Agnes.

"I believe this whole wonderful civic centre he is making of a little down-trodden, broken-down, fever-ridden mill town is the direct outgrowth of your call for teacups at the prayer-meeting that summer night,—how long ago it seems! When you dug up a talent that night to examine it, you did not know a whole pottery was to be set to work in its tomb, making clay into men and women, did you!"

"I don't know what you mean. Who is making men and women out of clay?"

"Ross Mevin. His father left him a lot of money-making, disease-breeding mill property. It is becoming one of the most remarkable civic centres in the world. The exhibitions of landscape and market gardens were very remarkable last year and the town voted salaries to some of the prize-winners for keeping plots as public parklets. What is the matter? Are you ill? You look fairly green you are so white. I am sorry you did not decide to go. Can't I get your refusal out of the box for you? No, it's too late. I saw the postman gathering up the mail nearly twenty minutes ago."

CHAPTER XXXII.

*"Why travel over seas to find what is so near,
Love is the only good, love and the blessed here."*

THE train moved rhythmically through the beautiful hill country, misty mountains and chains of lakes, with here and there broad sweeps of rivers, making a scene of ever varying beauty. At a station, nestled among flowering shrubs and brilliant foliage, Ross Mevin was awaiting the Landells, who had reached Lodesminster the day before the memorial exercises. Well-knit, with the poise of power, and the power of poise, he rested lightly but firmly on his feet, with eyes that knew the puzzles and mazes of life and had set themselves well upon the way to the solving thereof.

With all the clarity of vision, there was a shadow far back behind the mists of longing that told the tale. The attitude of seeking is one, of having is another. The taking-in of a long vista with shadows and lights gave a searching longing to the eyes that seemed apart from the healthy buoyancy of the man. It never failed to show itself, but only as a falling star to disappear even as the beholder strives to point it out. It came and went like a flash as he bent over Mrs. Landell's hand, then took Mr. Landell's in his friendly grasp.

A moment, and they were bowling down a street of matchless cleanliness, with great trees boughing in gothic arches above and over them. Everywhere were incipient signs of a great coöperative plan that was unfolding for utility, beauty and harmonizing of human needs with ideals. Great marshes, freed from

deadly miasma, were disclosing their fertility instead of the hydra of pestilence to the country round about. Forests of first-growth pines and hemlocks were becoming parks for the people. These were carefully cleared so as to leave the pristine beauty, holding within its bounds, by firm and loving interlacing of the roots with mother earth, the water bed of the river that ran through the town. Meadow lands were dotted with little children and old men, earning livelihoods by freeing the sweet and healthful grass from noxious weeds. Everywhere were signs of the civic life founded on livable ideals. New cottages were taking place of the blocks that had spread from street-end to street-end in hideous sameness. Where this had not yet been done, there were porticoes, and window boxes and plots of green, large, clean windows and many signs of diversifying the idea by individual expression. In the mills of new type, work was becoming an educator of humane and economic value to the workers, as well as a financial blessing.

They stopped a moment to note progress on one of the new mills, then whirled smoothly on to the homestead, where, years before, Daniel Landell had passed many enjoyable days with Martin Mevin, then a college man.

"Have you dropped law practice, Ross?" said Mr. Landell, as they sat down to luncheon.

"No, simply changed methods. I left the halls of justice and the chambers of equity, one day, to come down here to a directors' meeting. It was after my return to the city following the wonderful summer at Beneby. I wandered over the old house which had long been closed, with an appalling sense of divorcement from the law I was practising in the courts and an increasing revelation of the lawlessness I was allowing to run riot in my affairs. As I rested after a

lonely dinner I sat in the old library and—" he smiled a happy reminiscent little smile,—“I seemed to see dozens of teacups walk out of the church pantry in Beneby to be arraigned by that daughter of yours with her eyes of vision. I felt that I was one of those teacups. Round me was the written law; within me, was emptiness! From the windows I could see houses that no human should live in; a death-dealing odor wafted through the open doors. I set out to find its source. I found it in swamp lands belonging to me—too large a proposition for the local Board of Health to deal with. I sauntered about the village. Typhoid, diphtheria, fever—the placards were so many as to be horrifying, I went through the mills. There were hundreds of exhausted men and women. Deadly routine was turning some into automatons and crazing others. I saw the opportunity of extending the practice of law, outside the courts, into the lives of men and women—and I am trying to demonstrate that it can be done.”

“You are mentioned for legislature in this district, I see?”

“Yes, the practice of the law must be extended into legislation. I saw, at length, that I was a craven to refuse to raise the standard on the shoulders of understanding, and to share the responsibility of guiding its expression.”

“The car is at the door, sir, and there is a message for you from the Memorial,” said the butler.

“We will go on,” said Mevin, rising. “Mr. Landell, I don’t like the name, Memorial. My father still lives. He lives! What can the building be called that announces continuous life instead of death?”

“Do you *ask* me?” said Mr. Landell.

“I do.”

“Shall it be,” he said, meditatively, “The Practice of the Law of Martin Mevin’s life?”

"It shall! We will go to the building—where I shall confer with the master of ceremonies—then drive about the place. It is not long since I began the work, but in these days of directed effort years seem more and more unnecessary to the fulfilment of dreams—some dreams!"

He sighed and turned away.

"You have worked wonders," said Mrs. Landell, as, after an exhaustive survey of the building, they drove from point to point of interest, skirting the swamp lands, which, as fast as drained, were being made to bloom and fructify.

"It has been the result of coöperation from the first. Each step has been explained and tested before a board of the people and of experts. It has been taught individually and from the forum, for change terrifies those to whom change has generally meant something worse than before."

"Because the working man's mind is awake, as never before, it finds itself coming out of the state of inertia to that of chaos which always precedes formation and crystallization," said Mrs. Landell. "Tell us more," for Mevin, feeling he might be tiring his guests, had made a move to change the subject.

"First of all," settling, now, into the subject, assured of bearing his listeners with him, "I called the operatives and the townspeople together and explained reasons for, and methods of, clearing and draining the swamp lands and turning them into truck gardens on coöperative lines. There is an educational system, connected with the mills, that the mind may lead in what the hands are given to do. The operatives are not kept at one loom in the mill's work, but may take all steps from crude material to finished product. They who choose may take six months in the mills and six in the open,—as in the dairies, for instance. At

first, there was a certain amount of suspicion and indolence; now, though never free from the serpent of discontent that, in the mists of ignorance and non-comprehension, insinuates its way into every paradise, we feel assured, in the main, of coöperation."

"I see many women working in the gardens," said Mrs. Landell.

"Yes, they began, at once, planting the most available parts of the swamp lands and delight in planning details together with an advisory board of agriculturists. A corps of sanitary engineers and experts worked ahead of them to prepare, for cultivation, what has been a death dealer for years. Best of all—the faces of the men and women are unfolding their latent intelligence—expressing purpose and self-respect."

"What was your next step?" said Mr. Landell.

"Some of the men were developing anarchic tendencies to a marked degree. Investigation showed that one of the most vicious had been a farmer at home. I gave him oversight of one of the trucking districts. I believe this return to a life in the open is relating him to his problem."

"You seem to have all industries needed for the sustenance and comfort of the townspeople right here."

"Yes, that is my idea of a civic centre,—where the needs and the supply for the same are centralized. This bakery you see is serving to save the lives and reason of two English bakers who were eating their hearts out in the roar and whirl of the spindles. Now, they are using their energy in making a success of a bakery heretofore a failure. They are provided with the best materials and are giving the community good bread."

"These were the dreams your father dreamed when we were lads at college."

"I am happy that I am doing what I can to relieve

the monotony of routine—he, himself, disliked it so. I am happy, too, in the general sense that we are working together toward the one divine event—unity. There are one or two,—several, in fact, who are resenting replacing human beings with machines, but surely understanding is greater than ignorance, unity greater than dissension; illumination more powerful than darkness. Here come the operatives from the lower mill. I want your opinion as to whether variety of occupation adds to their personality as I know it has to their economic value.”

Mevin threw back his hair with a winning gesture so familiar to Agnes.

The bell struck. The employees walked into the streets, not with a straggling slouch but with purpose and virility. As they saw Mevin, one and another smiled at him with a sense of comradeship.

“Through it all,” Mevin turned again to his guests, while his splendid face glowed with the recognition of his idea, “there is the principle of unity of thought, purpose and deed,—the good of each in the good of all.”

“Mevin,” Mr. Landell leaned forward, took his friend’s hand and looked deeply into the earnest eyes, “I bestow upon you the noblest praise it is in the power of man to give,—it is a simple phrase but volumes can express no more:

“You are a good man.”

Agnes had been left behind with a sad heart because she, herself, had closed the door upon this natural meeting with the man she had learned to love. She saw him constantly before her; but always, now, with eternity separating them. Withal, there had come a sense of release that no marriage vows to another prevented her from thinking of him and loving him

in the secret places of her heart, apart from the knowledge of mankind.

Left to her thoughts, she plunged into the woods. At first, Ross Mevin's name recurred tantalizingly to her mind, its rhythm syncopating with the rhythm of her step. After a while the sense of unity that always came to her through the pines and hemlocks, the satin-barked beeches, the sky and the water and the immanence of God, made her feel as if she were riding a sea of truth into ports of high desire. Alternating with this happy elevation, her feelings ebbed toward the shoals on which she, perhaps, had irrevocably stranded her life—the idea of mistaken and ineffectual sacrifice. No, it was not irrevocable. She had been borne away from the shoals on the outgoing tides of her soul's intelligence. Again she became tranquil. Her prayer synchronized with her step and the song in her heart of Ross Mevin's name.

"Agnes!" Tom hailed her as she returned to the house, "I want to show you a letter from Ross Mevin. He wants me to undertake, for the children in Lodesminster who need it, something like what we are doing for Hi-Timmy. I am thinking of it—and I want to plan to marry in the spring. It looks as if my life were set too firmly in the cement of mediocrity ever to have experiences," he laughed happily. "I do want at least one; but I've made my bed of eiderdown and must lie in it, I suppose. Good-bye, I'm off to Cousin Matilda's. Her servants are to go to town early this evening, to open her house there, and I shall see her off in the morning. Then I'll close the house and stick a piece of paper over every single,—and double—window there, even to the fourth generation,—I mean, story;—that is her method of house closing, you know. You won't be nervous, will you, all alone in the house,—as far as family goes. I'm sorry it so happens; but

you know Cousin Matilda is nothing if not inopportune. Would you like to have Hi-Timmy come up from the Burtons'? He was to be down there, to-night, for he is going fishing and an early start will be easier from there."

"I thank you, I shall be quite at ease," smiled Agnes.

She watched him out of sight. Then she turned toward the garden—Hi-Timmy was strolling about, looking lonesome. For the first time, the change that for months had been stealing into his face arrested her attention.

"Whatever the appearance of Hi-Timmy Tidmouse," she said to herself, "he is re-forming himself, which is greater than taking big cities. He has inherent in him the name of Alexander. Alexander it shall be, henceforth, as far as I am concerned. Alexander!" she called.

Hi-Timmy started a little at this unusual manner of address.

"Would you like to go to a concert with me this afternoon?"

Hi-Timmy's lips did not always respond to overtures; but his eyes did. Now, they fairly brimmed over their delight.

"Run down to the Burtons' and ask if Amy may go with us,—would you like to?—We will take the twelve o'clock train and look in upon the violin-maker before the concert, which is to begin at two."

As Hi-Timmy went, there echoed in her heart, like the voice of a sweet and helpful teacher who might, at the moment of speaking, be out of visual range, the words the violin-maker had repeated, "Except ye become as little children ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."

She sang the quotation over and over to herself.

"It is truth speaking," she assured herself, "I am

beginning to distinguish the voice from the calls of doubt and imaginings. Now, to make the correspondence between my message and my expression that it may be truth in deed! Alexander!" she called after the little figure speeding down the driveway, "tell Amy we will come for her in the cart. Judd has to take Jetty to the blacksmith's and we will stop a few minutes, and watch the horse being shod. You said the other day you had never seen the red-hot iron beaten into shape and then put onto the hoof. We can stay and watch until train time, the shop is so near the station."

Amy could go and the programme was carried out to the children's delight. Timmy was entranced at the happiness—as he called it—about the blacksmith's shop. This seemed to have more effect upon him than the excitement of the flying sparks and the reiterant clang of the anvil. It was such a wonderful thing, this happiness, to which, until recently, he had been so pathetically a stranger.

"Miss Agnes," he said, dreamily, looking past the glow of the fire, "I'd rather be happy and sing happy and make happy than anything I know about. When the violin is mended I'll show you how happy sounds."

The train came pounding in and the children got on. Alexander forgot to shudder as the great mogul engine came toward them. What he recalled about it now, was, that it had helped him to pay Amy and to see the violin-maker and that it took him there many and many a time and always for something joyful. Now, as Agnes had told him, it was to take him to hear many people send their souls' expression through different instruments with such keen understanding of one man's idea, and such desire to make that one man's idea plain to all who heard, that each forgot himself in the glory of the whole and everybody was glad be-

cause the harmony was complete and sounded out in music caught from many and different sources, expressed as if it had come, as it really does, from one great soul.

With divided attention Agnes listened to the children's rather one-sided conversation—for it was Amy's voice, principally, that was heard in excited little squeals as the noise of the train lessened for the moment on a smooth bit of road. Timmy spoke more with his eyes, though he, too, in the ecstasy of the moment was moved to speech that came forth like spasmodic cheeps of a young bird and whose very sound frightened him into silence until aroused by some new joy beyond the power of repression. With this harmony of accompaniment, Agnes followed the thought that had been singing through her heart. To become as little children; to live as they do; think as they do; to be with them, is to enter the kingdom of heaven.

She watched Amy, especially, and saw how the worldliness of the grownups about her was already obscuring the idea of the heaven that "lies near us in our infancy," and how heaven was peeping in and out of the clouds of Hi-Timmy's understanding as he came slowly out of the darkness of his fright-warped condition. Then, irresistibly she found herself accommodating the song of her heart to the rhythm of Ross Mevin's name. Like an obligato to an accompaniment, it seemed to flow with tender insistence, not yet wholly consonant with the movement of her life, but weaving in and out of discord. Even while bringing dissonance into harmony, the clashing chord of questioning sounded in the quivering of her heart. What should she do with Philip Herman's problem!

"Life is for service," she admonished herself.

"Ross Mevin!"

The name seemed caught and suspended in the air like a chain of melody from a string of golden bells.

She bade the children good-bye at the station and turned towards home, her heart still singing so that she did not notice the stillness of the house. The home helpers, who loved her, had prepared an especially dainty repast. They hovered about her until she assured them she felt no loneliness. Then they left her alone with her sweet soliloquy.

As night settled down, she lost the serenity she had acquired. Without apparent reason her spirit became strangely turbulent. She turned from the sketch she was penning—so completely interwoven with thoughts of Ross—to combat an overwhelming paroxysm of sobs. Soul and heart unexplainedly surged and stirred within her, inundating her with terrors which gripped her, not in physical fear, but in contention with forces she could neither escape nor understand.

“What do you want me to do!” she sobbed, not knowing whom she addressed. “What do you want me to do!” Clenching her hands, she paced the floor, striving to pierce the blackness of horror which possessed her. Underneath all, from time to time, there came an uplift and a strong sense of spiritual power.

Again the sickening dread enfolded her. A tremendous stirring of soul elements mingled with her surging emotion. Her body throbbed until she felt its pulsations against the chair. Soundless sobs shook her from head to foot. Subtle powers within were inciting her to action, and, with seemingly equal strength, contending forces held her back. She was in chaos, torn by the emotional tornado which, the more she tried to repress, the more it possessed her.

Impelling herself to outward calm, she sought the kitchen, hoping to gain moral support from the homely simple garrulity of the maids; but the evening had

passed into midnight during this inexplicable upheaval, and the women had retired. Returning to the library, she settled herself in her father's special chair, with an intense desire to gain from it something of his strength and insight. Still the tumult did not abate. This whirlwind of emotions terrified and mystified her.

She took a book and compelled herself to look at its pages. Reading was impossible. The inward surge swept past her will and blinded her brain to the printed words.

Steadily, like filings, by the magnet, her attention was drawn from the lifted page to the room adjoining that in which she sat. As she saw it, it was all ablaze. She leaped to her feet and ran to the hall. It, too, seemed a mass of flames. Wherever she turned, the same horrible phenomenon assailed her. Everything she looked upon seemed seething in fire. She went through the rooms, and lurid light lay between her and all on which she thought to look.

As suddenly as this mystery had made itself apparent, so it vanished. Dense blackness settled over all. Then the fearful obsession possessed her again and threatened to rend her. Still the victim of unreasoning terror she found herself up-stairs in a crumpled heap upon her bed, every aperture of the room closed against the awful flames. The sense of being enclosed oppressed her, and she flung open the door. As it swung back, she stood transfixed. The upper hall was aflame with light and crawling up the staircase, anguish in every feature, crept a dark figure whose personality she knew, but, in her turbulence of mind, could not establish.

With sensibilities keenly alert, but too terrified to move, she sat as one paralyzed, gazing into the blackness that now supplanted this horrible vision. Time

lived not, to her. Whether minutes or hours, it mattered not. Still she sat, eyes gazing, unseeing, and mind crisping with horror at the blaze of light it still could vividly discern.

The night wore on. The cool damps of early dawn invaded the house. Still the clutch of horror held her rigid.

Into the tenseness of her stillness, finally there crept a slight release. She moved. A fluttering breath quivered its way through her lungs and started the suspended circulation. Her blood gave a swift bound and she almost swooned with the suddenness of action after the inhibition of her forces. Then, little by little, it assumed its usual, normal course, and the breath came longer now, less quivering, more sustained.

“‘God is forever still.’ Then what moves? Let me be still, just a moment, dear God, not reasoning, not questing, but still, just still.”

Minutes passed. The stillness grew. It calmed the turbulence of her mentality, whose constant movement had prevented her from clearly discerning the great vision. With the strength of a purpose, not wholly within her knowledge, but within her power to fulfil, she sprang to her feet, seized her heavy cloak, and ran from the house.

The silence made weird calls to her but she heeded them not. With the unerring tread of one who knows the way she turned from the private drive and down the silent street.

Even the cry, “Why did I not go before!” which threatened to stifle her, was held in abeyance before the determination to make up, as best she could, for her delay and to be there in time, *in time!*

On she sped until, at the farther end of the village, Cousin Matilda’s house loomed darkly before her. Making no attempt, by ringing or knocking, to rouse

her brother, she ran to one of the old-fashioned French windows, broke a pane, and, entering the room, went at once to the electric button and pressed it. There was no response.

As she moved towards the kitchen in search of matches and a lamp, her foot struck an unyielding something. Stooping, she touched it. Her fingers fell upon something cold, unresponsive—a nose, eyes,—a human face. It did not move as her fingers traveled over the immobile surface—and through the house there was no sound.

A wonderful power upheld her as she stood over the form and prayed. In the dense blackness of the shaded, blinded room, she could not tell which way to turn, or who or what it might be,—a burglar who had fallen before her brother, or Tom!—her hand touched a woman's dress. She traced it down an arm to a hand. Upon the fingers were the old-fashioned rings her Cousin Matilda always wore, but the face moved not.

Roused, now, to the fact that she must find her brother, and with no thought of fleeing until she had thoroughly made the quest, she stood, outreaching from a centre of assurance that, even in the darkness, God is Light. Fear fell from her as a loosed garment. Only the knowledge that she was sent to save infilled her. About her, there radiated a soft, sweet luminence. Through it and in it she distinguished articles in the room. There was something else—she had vaguely noted it before but had passed it by amid the horrors that had urged themselves upon her attention. It was the odor of smoke. It grew more perceptible as she advanced towards the kitchen, and, as she stepped over the threshold, something else halted her. Again she stooped, this time, with unerring direction, plac-

ing her hand upon a brow—a finely chiselled forehead, with a little fall of wavy hair—the brow of Tom!

She knelt beside him in the dark, the light of her own trust in Infinity giving her a supernal, rather than a supernatural light.

This face was warm, and in a moment there came a whisper from parted lips, formed with panting breath, and words with Tom's dear, whimsical grasp on humor and on fact.

"I have what I asked for,—an experience! I have been calling for you all night."

"Oh, Tom, I almost did not come!"

"I could not blame you. I have been begging you to cut such demands out of your life. Fool! All night I have seen father's face as it looked when I said what I did."

"Can't you move?"

"No. Perhaps my back is broken."

Agnes groaned.

"And perhaps not. It may be worse than it is,—what a bull!"—his old humor twinkling in the words.

"I will telephone,—"

"Matilda had it—and the electricity—cut off."

"I smell smoke."

"She hid some silver in the woodpile instead of sending it to the bank,—decided—not—to leave it there—upset a lamp in the middle of—a lot of—kindling—" His strength was ebbing fast but he struggled on.

"She fell into the blaze. I got her out—she must have breathed the flame—died as I was carrying her up-stairs,—found her heavier—heavi—then dead—all in the dark—dark—Agnes!—" his voice trailed away into unconsciousness.

Agnes never knew what followed—how she obtained aid; how they got Tom home into his own cool

bed; the return of the father and mother; the laying away of Cousin Matilda—it was all a dream. What, in thankfulness of heart, she did know was, that she had saved Tom—for the life-blood had been flowing as he lay there and in another hour help would have been too late.

There was over a year of plaster casts and tender care. There were realms of revelation as he lay there apart from the things that are seen and heard and done and in communion with the things that are unseen, eternal in the heavens.

To Agnes, also, came a revelation of what she had called the tragedy of love, as she studied the meanings of the Great Teacher's life through the close analysis of their own.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"Love cannot with impunity be liberated from the sacred order of life."

"LETTERS from the South!" said Agnes. "A budget from Tom and one from Mattee Sue, Mother, for you!"

As she spoke, with eyes bright with interest and cheeks glowing with the exhilaration of her swift walk to the mail box, she entered the library and deposited her letters in Mrs. Landell's lap, then seated herself by the snapping fire of driftwood. Watching the vivid colorings of copperas and brine-steeped nails and seasoned ship wreckage flash and flame the histories they could not speak in words, she awaited the news.

"Which shall we open first?" said Mrs. Landell.

"I am always wondering which is the best way to attack a lot of mail, whether to choose the most desired first or last," laughed Agnes.

"Let's climax the process, then," joined in Mr. Landell. "Take Mattee Sue's first and Tom's second."

"That won't leave much but the personality of Tom's letter, then, for the woman always tells the news. Go on, mother, here's for Mattee Sue's!"

Mrs. Landell, smiling, opened the pretty envelope, dashed and flecked with a very characteristic writing, and began,—

"Dear People All,—Your big son came buzzing down here like a great June bug months ago, buzzed so incessantly for a fortnight that he absolutely succeeded in wooing from me the

promise of marrying him after a while. Now for a second time he has come down here, buzzing just the same but seeming more doleful because a June bug near Thanksgiving time is out of place and, like clothes out of season, seems pitiful. Besides that, he looks so meek, so very *manageable* (which he did not before) since that dreadful accident—and he has told me, Agnes, how very wonderful you were,—that I don't know but that it would be very wise for me to agree to his wish to marry me at once. You must know, dear Mamma Landell, that it is a wise plan for me to take the reins of government while he *is* manageable. Don't you fully agree with me!

“Of course, having that idea, nothing would do but that the ceremony must be performed instantly. You know men—I am sure you do! They are a dreadfully long time making up their minds to a thing but, having reached that point, the next train isn't a sufficiently rapid vehicle to accomplish the desired end.

“Of course, I wouldn't hear of doing this without letting you know and having you see me. Are you willing to take the next train South and behold your son put off his garment of assurance and come under the yoke of my dominion? Would it make you tremble too much to witness such capitulation on his part! We will wait till we hear from you before setting the date when he will hand me his sword and sign his name to our treaty of coöperation. Come quickly, all, for we don't want any one to know about this and want to get out of town as quickly and quietly as possible. No one wants to worry about a trousseau when the weather is adorable for traveling and the man you love has been snatched from the jaws of death so very recently, and wants you to help him back to his old self with splendid additions.

“Your daughter and sister soon-to-be,

“MATTEE SUE LANDELL.”

“She must be a sweet child,” said Mr. Landell, thoughtfully and tenderly; “but Helen, those children don't want us to go down there and advertise the secret they are striving to hide. Write them at once to go on with their very sensible plan of doing the thing quietly. It's better, too, for Tom, than all those stag-

dinners and wind-ups preceding a fashionable wedding, don't you think so, Agnes!"

"Now for Tom's," returned Agnes, the love-light deepening in her eyes.

"Dear Mother, Father and Agnes,—Isn't Mattee Sue fine to accede to what she sees is my preference—to get out of the turmoil of a big wedding. I know it is a sacrifice on her part, but she refuses to admit it—she's that sort. I am glad, for I don't feel very fit for that sort of thing, and to come home without my rhetoric queen—well, it seems as if I couldn't, that's all. Are you going to let me bring her to the roof tree—where my loved ones dwell—that has harbored me and nourished the ideals you have born within me? Then, we will travel for a month and be home in time to give the Southern Jessamine a northern Christmas with a yule log in the big fireplace in the dining-room.

"Just the same as ever, I am,

"YOUR TOM."

There was silence after the mother had finished reading this. The driftwood sputtered and threw forth vari-colors and the flames seized a rusty nail and sang about it as it translated, in terms of light and expression, the inertia of its seeming uselessness. Then the mother rose.

"I will go and answer these at once," she said gently. "Of course the boy and the little bride shall come home to us, Daniel?"

"Of course," Mr. Landell threw more driftwood on the fire.

After the mother had left the room, Agnes and her father sat silent for a long time; then, unshed tears softening the light in her beautiful eyes, she went to his side.

"Father, explain life to me, I don't know how to grasp it or how to use it. It uses me. Is that right? Tell me."

"The same little child and seer of years ago," and he smiled tenderly as he caressed her broad smooth brow. "You always will be babe and seer, for of the child is born the seer and the seer lives in the child's heart. What do you want to know that you think I can tell you?"

"Everything, father. I know that great distances are opening to me. Last night I had such a strange experience—inwardly, you know—to others it would seem I was resting on the sofa. Fully conscious of my going, I was led into spaces I never before had traversed. There was no withdrawing on my part from the test, as there has been before. I went willingly and intelligently, I felt so sure. As I went consciously toward what was given me to know, I said, 'God, hold my hand.' When I rose from the sofa, I still had not let go God's hand. Do you suppose the experience was like St. Paul's when he was caught up into the third heaven and saw things 'not lawful to utter'? I feel as if it were an initiation."

"With the true initiation there is nothing spectacular or phenomenal, my little child."

"There was not in this. Not even light. I knew, father, knew!"

Her father looked at her tenderly.

"I am sure God held your hand, and always will, for you have come forth, not disintegrant, but whole. Because you feared not, you have passed through unscathed. Continue to build on your foundation of Truth and Grace and you will be a blessing to many. Trust to your spiritual insight to teach you to recognize the new type of humanity. Our fathers and mothers are not our only heritage. We are the sons and daughters of intelligent conception, intelligent manifestation and conscious reality. Cease striving, little one. 'As soon as striving ceases, the fruition of trust begins.'

Each moves in his own orbit. There is no limit to the love and wisdom he may radiate. A very sad part of this truth, dear, is, that the more expressed it is, the more probable that we ourselves are unaware of the wonderful radiation from us. We must be content not to know it and realize that if we allow sorrow, distrust or discontent to dim our infinite trust and faith that it is so whether we realize it or not, the radiation is by so much obscured. Neither is life spectacular. It is as simple and as natural as the dawn."

She was silent a long time. Her father could see the dawn of which he spoke, coming to the day, radiating from her very being as she sat there still, and as he waited for what he knew would come.

"So often you speak of loving impersonally," she said at length, aloud, "but there is something intensely personal in your words."

"Love always is personal in a sense. It is a state of feeling and always related to physical states of consciousness."

"I am sure there is something above love. Why does it evade and elude me?"

"You have tried to leap a natural sequence in the unfoldment of soul expression. Do not crush or scorn any expression. Imbue it with the concentrated power of the Great Eternal. Do not crush your will or stifle your affections. These are given us as teachers and as lovers. Dangerous, indeed, it is to strive to express truth in terms beyond our growth, as dangerous as to place St. Mark's dome on a foundation of a woodman's hut. Do not crush love. In the first place, you cannot do it. Let it be energized by 'That Which Is Behind.' Do not love less, love more. Let it be great and eternal. Do not crush personality. Let it be larger and more superb than ever, until it reaches the heights of the Impersonal. Then, emotions, instead of

being agitators and disturbers of our peace, will be invested with the moving, growing spirit of the messengers from heart to heart of this great creation. I do not wonder you doubt and fear the word love, for many confound it with cellular attraction, which, as basis for marriage, is as a 'rag, a bone and a hank of hair.' Neither love nor marriage are synonymous with only the cellular attraction called sex affinity. Sex is one of the youngest phases—the beginnings of unfoldment. Marriage is the divine symbol portraying the union of the personal with its ideal; the specific with the universal; the revelation of unity. This is the mystery of love, the ideal of marriage—the unfoldment of the states of consciousness of the individual to ever widening and enlightening ideals through the union of lives and aspirations."

"Father," she whispered, moving closer to him, "I don't know what to do."

He understood and answered softly,

"'But when they are joined together, the two, together, appear as only one body, and it is so. And all the universe is in a state of happiness because all things receive blessedness from their perfect body. And this is an arcanum.'"

"I have been afraid to love any one, love has brought me so much sadness."

He held her close.

"Not love; but too little of the true sort. Like children, studying the earth by a ball, to us is revealed the great love through relationships, each with its specific lesson—the affection of father, mother, brother, lover, husband, until life's lessons, through detachment from former relations, lead us into larger understanding of each relation or into new relations. This is the larger sense taught by Jesus, who expressed personality in every breath he drew and dealt with indi-

viduals even more than with masses. Such love asperses no motives, feels no slights; knows no difference. Instead of being obscured by the mask of shape, communion will exist in added clarity and strength. Thus the personal becomes the impersonal and the personal again, in sense as much greater as the ocean transcends the single wave. At first it will seem that the personal element is annihilated; instead, you will find happiness enhanced, friendships hallowed and made more internally close, and your understanding of love grown more broad, true and deep. Lift your face to the sun and drink in happiness; it is your birthright. Know that love of the individual is not limited by any restrictions of personality, and that every soul to whom you give a spiritually personal love is yours forever in the orbits of understanding."

"Why am I crucified at what others receive with childlike confidence?"

"You are in the throes of creation into the Christ type of man. On the crosses of revelation and consequent knowledge are we crucified, and remain like one asleep until the Christ Principle germinates and becomes manifest within us. Jesus of Nazareth, in his deity-manifestation, stands before us supreme in strength, a personal saviour, not only because He has awakened us to the knowledge of our anointing by Holy Spirit, for service to humanity, through Himself who lived years ago; but because He still lives expressed through the personality of every individual. You have discriminated; been disgusted and have hated what you have discriminated against. You have controlled this disgust; you have tolerated; endured. With faith, where you could not see, you are approaching balance, where mediumship gives way to adeptship. It is the door to spiritual initiation. You are right. Your experience was an initiation. With faith, trust and

balance, you entered in, and came out whole. Take, now, the next step. Enter into the joy of thy Lord."

"Joy, Father?"

"Yes, spiritual joy."

He waited a moment, then spoke again.

"All life is an arcanum. Holy mysteries unfold within us. As we learn the uses and the blessedness of our varied experiences we vitalize with acting force. Through this most wonderful arcanum of life,—the interrelation and interaction of man and woman, the Great Light calls you to declare Him; through the comprehension of your bi-une forces, through the making of your seed, to perpetuate His idea, to become regenerate in marriage."

He stood beside her a moment, then laid his hand gently upon her forehead and went away.

Agnes sat in silence for some time, then went upstairs. Love accompanied her. It spoke from the winter's landscape seen through the windows as she mounted to her room. It spoke through the articles in her chamber, into which she had breathed her desires, her fears. Before this, her love had been a tigerish grip, lest she lose her loved ones as heretofore she felt had been her fate, or else, a dull, apathetic abnegation of what she had failed to hold.

To-day, the fear was gone. She knew that nothing could take from her the love of those who inherently belonged to her, neither death nor any other creature. She realized, at last, that love to man is love to God; that it never dies, and that, "Twain blending into one, sets forth the spiritual possibilities of man."

"Then comes the statelier Eden back to man;

Then reigns the world's great bridals, chaste and calm;

Then springs the crowning race of human kind."

The rooms were ready for the return of Tom with

the little bride. No one knew just when they were coming. They were to walk in as if they had always lived there, said Tom and Mattee Sue,—only a hint that it would be just about now,—Mattee Sue had added in her whimsical fashion.

There had been a heavy fall of snow. Putting on her snowshoes Agnes went into the forest to seek there the benediction that always, winter and summer, she found in its heart.

The air was like elixir. The great trees were clothed in snow. Now and then a twig snapped or branch fell. The lake, plainly visible beyond, lay, an unbroken sheet of snow and ice, the sun, shining on the dazzling surface, won to view little clouds of vapor, here and there. Men were cutting ice not far from the further shore. Other than this, the woods were silent, and she felt herself alone.

“Side by side with the willing is the letting,” she quoted, as she walked, attuning the words to her movement. She thought upon this as she made her way to the long drive that led from the lower end of the estate and that had been leveled for sleighing. She wanted to see the king beech of the forest and his court in emeralds and ermine.

“Harmony is not coerced into being, it always exists. It is the liberty of God!”

She was approaching the road from a hilltop when her eyes caught the flash of color in the distance like the flicker of a red-bird's wing in the sunshine. She recalled the witching bit of folksong she had often heard Tom sing about his beloved,—

“O swan of slenderness,
Dove of tenderness,
Jewel of joys, arise!
The little red lark
Like a soaring spark
Of song, to his sunburst flies.

"But till thou'rt risen,
Earth is a prison
Full of lonesome sighs.
Then awake and discover
To thy fond lover
The morn of thy matchless eyes."

Again the red flashed in the sunshine, heralding a reality of girlish beauty with rich furs and swaying skirts blowing about her,—a woman, supple and full of grace, in company with a familiar masculine figure, appearing and disappearing among the snow-clad hemlocks that towered to heaven and swept the ground.

Agnes focussed her gaze, using her hands as telescope. In clear contralto, she sent through the icy air the refrain of the sweet folksong in greeting to the advancing two, the mischief in their merry eyes sparkling over the spaces as they espied her.

"Tom, it is your very self! and, of course, the little red lark beside you, is Mattee Sue."

Bubbling with merriment, the two skated nearer shore to Agnes.

"What a way to bring a Southern bride home to the Northland—certainly it is introducing her into the midst of things—but can you, a Southern girl, transform yourself into a naiad of the ice as well as of the air that you come to us, first on the perfume of a flower, then on the rune of the singing skate!"

"Oh-w-er-w-y," laughed the girl, holding a hand to Agnes, "Tom, catch me,—with all my success at making a stunning début, I am safe only w'en on the move. Take these things off!"

In an instant Tom was kneeling before his divinity, while Mattee Sue sang gaily on,

"Oh-w-er-y, of co'se you are surprised that I can skate; but a winter in Montreal is responsible for that. W'en I returned home, I was so delighted with the

accomplishment that I got one of the icemen to start an arena, like your big Boston skating place we've just been testing. I told him he would make the fortune of his life and that I would be *personally* responsible for having the rink filled with skaters winter and summer,—especially summer—if he would see that the ice was properly frozen and in order. He fitted up the tiniest bit of a rink you ever saw, but a few couples managed to have a perfectly beautiful time—catch me, Tom—till one day the men didn't get the ice frozen hard enough to hold us and six of us got an ice bath. It made every one but me mad—but w'at's the use! Anyway, it stopped our fun, for no one would trust the slippery deceiver any more.

“I simply had to have something startling to tell mauma about my first experiences Bostonward—I *knew* your house was too well ordered to have anything funny to write about, and if I don't have funny things to tell, papa mopes and thinks he hasn't his righteous dues and begins to dramatize his emotions—an easy thing to do w'en his little girl has gone away forever and he can't kiss her good night, and scold her for teasing him. There. Now Tom has taken off my skates and I can stand on my feet, may I kiss you? I didn't attempt it before, because though I thought you *might* not *mind* theoretically having me rest on your bosom in a sisterly fashion, I don't think you would care to sustain my entire weight on your shoulders.”

Agnes held out her arms to the radiant creature who stepped from the ice, and greeted her in a manner that gave Tom intense delight.

Mattee Sue carolled musically on—

“It was *so* nice of you not to mind our being married without a lot of fuss and feathers after the dear boy had had that dreadful tragedy—he told me how

very wonderful you were," giving her a tender look from out her lustrous eyes.

"You have to stand up to be fitted for clothes w'en you want to be—"

"With your best fellow," Tom completed the sentence as the three turned towards the path from which Agnes had approached them.

"Tell me about your marriage."

"It was such fun. We were married early, then took automobiles for Rosenderry, three miles away, and would have caught the train for the North without anyone's catching us, but for a meditative cow which refused to get off the track."

"Did no one suspect?" Agnes asked the question with a fascination it made Tom happy to see, as she became imbued with the charm of Mattee Sue's varying expression of face and manner, and winsome inflections of voice.

"W-er-w-er-y, some people simply smell news before it is baked; so, of course, six automobiles caught up with us and we almost received full punishment for running away, didn't we, Tom!"

Tom squeezed the red-lark's wing for reply, as she hopped over a fallen hemlock trunk.

"Pray how far have you walked, you bride of yesterday?"

"I saw the Charles River crowded with skaters as we came through Boston and nothing would do but that Tom buy me some skates, and then, after we had had a try on the river, he suggested that we walk from the station and cut across the lake and slip in on you all, and so we did—"

"You are romantic—to lead her to your hearthstone through the aisles of Nature's temples benisoned with the incense of heaven's day."

Mattee Sue broke in impulsively,—

“‘Twine, twine and intertwine,
Breath of oak and breath of pine,
Till the inner life, of God,
Incense sends from sky to sod.

“‘Twine, twine and intertwine,
Soul of you with soul of mine,
Till the longings of my heart,
Root in strength thy powers impart.’”

Agnes' heart gave a leap. The stanzas were hers, sent off, shyly, on a journey to the world of literature, and given space in a magazine.

“Doesn't that just express it!” said Mattee Sue.

“That sounds familiar,” meditated Tom. “Where did you get it, O lark with the red, red wing—on your hat! Jupiter, didn't you write that, Agnes?”

“Yes,” returned Agnes.

“How perfectly lovely!” said Mattee Sue, enthusiastically. “And to think that before I ever had met you face to face, I had found you out in spirit, through your lovely, lovely thoughts!”

Mattee Sue's triumph was complete. Tom could see that! The slight tension, which, despite his courage, he had felt, relaxed. He was himself once more. He had been sure of his father and mother, and, in a way, of Agnes—but it was all right, now, anyway. He heaved a sigh of deep relief.

Mattee Sue heard the sigh, looked at him comprehendingly, and twinkled. Then she turned her attention to the grand old trees and the wonderful landscape of the splendid parks, admiring and exclaiming with her delicious little portamentos and crescendoes of speech, until Agnes was captured wholly beyond retreat.

The long stretch of driveway was reached, and the dear old home rose before them. Mattee Sue stopped

suddenly, pausing, alert, like a bird ready for flight, her rich furs trailing the snow and the red wing gleaming in the sunshine.

"Your home!" she said softly, floating the thought into melody of sound, "Your home!"

Agnes walked on, feeling the sacredness of the little sister's entrance into a new life, but with a sense of great loss engulfing her. Personal love! What should she do without the old-time nearness of her brother—her second self!—But Mattee Sue caught her arm.

"No, never!" she said emphatically, "Never! I want to go in with *you*, Agnes, *with you and Tom*—the dear souls, whose love, my love shall cement the stronger! We will go in *together!*"

So, with the flash of the red-bird's wing, Mattee Sue, with the "morn of her matchless eyes," entered her heart's abode.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"He liveth best who loveth best."

Coleridge.

AGNES grew, at once, enthusiastically fond of her sister, who, in her winsome way, nestled into the heart of Agnes' ideals, listening intently where she could not follow, and loving, always. With gentle insistence, the newcomer made her pull out stacks of nearly forgotten manuscript, and revelled in the love stories, and raved over the poems, generously seeing no fault therein, and refusing to permit any unkindly criticisms from the author.

"You must stop saying horrid things of my sister, Agnes Landell," she would say prettily, stopping her ears, "*Please, please* don't *spoil* these beautiful things for me by being cruel to them!"

This comradeship was an unutterable delight to Tom. The one regret in the joy of his marriage with his bird of the red, red wing, had been the fear of saddening his beloved sister, who, though surrounded by so much, seemed, in some inexplicable manner, to be closed away from life's joyousness. To find, that, instead of loss, he had brought her gain was delight to his soul.

Still, as days went on, there reappeared in her, a pensiveness—the monotone of unrest.

"Ross Mevin is in love with her and she doesn't know it," said Mrs. Landell, one day, when sounds from the organ penetrated the room where she and her husband were waiting to see Tom and Mattee Sue

off on a skating trip, "I certainly shall have to ask her to stop playing. It is like the wail of a lost soul."

" 'He restoreth her soul,' Helen," said Mr. Landell, happily.

"Do you have a Bible text for every occasion?" Tom looked at his father, reverently.

"There is one there to fill every need, laddie!"

"I did not agree with you about Ross." As usual, Mrs. Landell drew her husband from the universal to the personal aspect of the case in hand. "But after I saw him at Lodesminster, I felt sure of it. Do you know, I believe that what agitated Agnes the morning we received his invitations was that she believed they were his wedding invitations,—what are you laughing at!—You knew it all the time! If you knew so much, why did you not urge her to go with us?"

"It is best as it is. She must waken herself."

"Can't there be any more Kathleen Mavourneens in this new idea of unfoldment?" asked Tom, with a twinkle in his eyes. "Then I am all-gloriously glad I got in my nineteenth century love-making before the twentieth grew old enough to prevent it," and he beamed over at Mattee Sue who just then entered the room, skates in hand. It took but a moment for Tom to acquire his, and the two soon disappeared among the pines.

In a short time they were at the lake. Tom had strapped on their skates and the two were flashing here and there over the silver ice, now dancing, now poising like birds for flight, now racing with each other, Mattee Sue entranced with the novel exercise, until, exhilarated with the wonder of it, they burst into joyous laughter.

"Isn't it splendid!" exclaimed Tom rapturously. "And isn't it fortunate the dear little Southern girl

knows how to skate! Did you ever believe love could be so wonderful!"

"W'y, of co'se," parried Mattee Sue. "You don't suppose I ever would *limit* myself! I expand, my dear, expand!"

"Indeed, you do, you darling! You make me expand, too! So much so, that I burst a button off my coat the other day when I went to fasten it; and I burnt up a lot of theses I wrote before I married you, and had intended using this winter."

"Has marriage made you so wise!" teased Mattee Sue. "If you will permit me to say so, it should have made you realize how little you know about love! First place, it mustn't inspire you to destroy old theses, but to keep them, in order to study them in new lights. Calling Agnes' love affairs, *negative slumps*, as you did this afternoon, and then, contrary to all your professional theories, worrying over her as well. W'y! Any fourteen-year-old girl in Gustaga could have told you long ago w'at ails her, and w'y she is thinking of some impossible man to match up with, as you say she is to your terror, and would know that that wail on the organ is the recitative before the dramatic entrance of the doctor who arrives to sing the aria as to w'ether the symptoms are caused by terrapin or crab out of season. If I knew your sea about here, I could quickly pick out the identical fish that is causing the spasm."

"What a mixture of metaphors!"

"I don't care! I prefer to! It's like that salad we had yesterday, ice cream,—mayonnaise, dinner and desert all at once."

"Here comes one of them, now," said Tom, as, just then, Mr. Herman was seen skirting the side of the lake near which they were slowly skating.

Mattee Sue poised and studied the approaching figure intently.

"W'y! It's my minister I have grown to love because he understands all that may be going on under the sunshine of you, to make it warm and life-giving instead of burning and killing,—the pain, the sorrow, the life rain, you know! What a beautiful face he has! Oh! But he has been through a lot! He is coming out of it, though!" Her voice had an awe-struck quality. His life is being glorified by what has come into it. A shadow rests upon it still; but it will be gone soon, and his face reminds me of the deep long shadows—the purple ones, that are purple because the blood-red of the sun coming up from under the hills in the day dawn, is behind it. I love to hear him, Tom. I never knew anything so wonderful as those noon services w'en you go into the church, with never a soul to speak to you, and think of Father Ryan's

"I walk down the valley of silence,
Down the dim, mystic valley, alone,
And the hush of my heart is as holy
As hovers where angels have flown."

"Then 'without sound of trumpets,' a voice steals into your consciousness, speaking with the clearness and simplicity of a child, and with a heart-touch in it,—not put on—but the sort that makes you sure he knows w'at your heartache means to you, because *he has one all the time*; but that you may take cheer, because his is teaching him, and yours may teach you, till, bye and bye, though the pain never goes, you will glory in it, because it teaches you so much!"

They skated on silently, love strengthening its power between them as they moved side by side. Mr. Herman still walked along the side of the lake unknowing of their presence and the light fell upon him with a

peculiar urging power as if to awake in him that which slept. Mattee Sue went tenderly on,—

“Then you go out with no human hand or voice coming in between you and the thought that you are one with the Great Eternal. I was—I must confess—just as homesick as I could be the other day, and I went in there. W’en I came out, I felt as if I was in heaven and heaven was in me. A woman sat in front of me. She had stolen in with a traveling bag in her hand—looked as if she might have skipped a train to go to the service. She was crying; but w’en she came out she was in peace. Then, there was a splendid looking man. He seemed desperate w’en he sat down; but w’en he went out, he walked like a king. It is beautiful—the true idea, I think—Mr. Herman wasn’t made to marry, though. Some people aren’t, you know,—” with a pretty air of wisdom. “Poor things, they go through life like a bird born with a broken wing and don’t know they are missing anything because they never have known w’at it is to fly.”

“You darling!” murmured Tom.

“I suppose the dear Lord makes it up to them, somehow, though—though I’m awfully sorry for them.”

As the minister turned away from the lake shore and passed from sight, Tom moved closer to her.

“It is so lovely to know you are some one’s onty-donty, and he is yours, and that if he flies, he needs you for the little pin feathers that keep him still in the air, doing nothing, seemingly, like our wonderful buzzards with the big wings that show, and the millions of little air balloons underneath them—that don’t look as if they would amount to anything but mean so much.”

Tom came closer, and captured her arm.

“That’s w’y we women talk all the time, maybe,—though I’ve never known any good reason for it before.

No, no, Mr. Herman isn't the one for Agnes. As a man, he will pass out of her life, I can tell you that! As a person, he has nothing to do with her heart. Perhaps something *about* him, has, though."

Tom stopped still in astonishment.

"Mattee Sue, you little wizard! You are perfectly right! How did you know!"

"I don't know w'at you know I know; but I know it!" retorted Mattee Sue in her usual succinct manner.

"I will tell you! She has been believing,— " and Tom sketched the history of Agnes' soul-questioning, as he understood it.

"Marry a man for an idea of something else! Tom, it is very strange w'at little common sense some *very superior persons* have! W'y! Even I would know better than that! Do you suppose I ever would have married you because you didn't like it that I answered your letters? I *might* come to love skulls and degenerates *because* of you; but never you, because I preferred skulls and degenerates."

"That is a very sweet compliment and I'm awfully glad I got you."

He looked adoringly at the winsome creature who became more and more radiant as the sharp air vitalized her and her thoughts sang through her being.

"You are unutterably adorable! But how can one help Agnes?"

"We will have to show her how *absolutely* necessary it is for the right woman to marry the right man in order to make something of him. To begin her instruction, *you* must do *positively everything* I say and let her see w'at six months with a wise woman can make of you!"

"What's the matter with me now!" said Tom, a trifle nettled, for fine and well-balanced as he was, even he would have his wife find him perfect.

"Well, for one thing, you are *very* bossy!" skating close to him and removing an imaginary speck of dust from the lapel of his coat, while her face came into proximity to his own, and the inevitable ensued.

"Now after this ocular and osculatory exhibition in full view of the highway, we *certainly* should be able to combine to help this sister of yours," and Mattee Sue finally disengaged herself and adjusted her hat. "You see, she is wandering down strange and untrodden paths. I suppose she never has flirted in all of her little life, and, if she attempted it, it would be with elephantine dignity over the saving of souls instead of attending to her business of making two souls perfectly happy, and incidentally, throwing arms about any others who come within her reach. *You* wouldn't expect to be able to construct a skeleton, would you, if you didn't know bones?"

"No, I suppose Emerson is right when he says the village boy selects his wife without the risk that Milton deploras as incident to the selection of scholars and geniuses."

"You didn't have to go to Emerson for that, did you!" cooed Mattee Sue, her tones and manner making her banter delicious, "I felt all a-quiver with modesty w'en I came up here, I thought you Yankees were so wise; but you all seem patterned after your family doctor—excepting your blessed father. I see your Æsculapius making his trips in the village with a bag full of big volumes. I suppose he sits by the bedside of his patient and proves his diagnosis by the case some one else has had under totally different circumstances."

"That's not fair!" flamed Tom hotly.

"Oh, yes it is," Mattee Sue was unperturbed. "Lots of you don't dare to praise an art exhibition until you've read the *Boston Transcript!*"

Tom, who, with Agnes, generally attempted to carry arguments to a finish, stopped and giggled like a boy as he gently twitched Mattee Sue's stole into place, taking care to let his finger trail lightly across the exquisite outline of her chin as if it were a necessary part of the adjustment.

Meanwhile, Agnes had wandered away from the organ and an hour later found herself near the green-houses.

Hi-Timmy, who was spending some days at the Landells', had been set to repotting some palms for the house. Agnes saw him, now, in a violent rage at his inability to make one of them stand in its tub as he wished it to. Tom and Mattee Sue, skates over shoulders, were standing near him.

"Pouf, Hi-Timmy, you are growing old too fast and not in the right way," Tom was saying. "Just look at that wrinkled-up face of yours! Did you know that every time you are angry, you form for your body something that stiffens you all up? Your skin will wrinkle up like a monkey's; you will grow stiff and dry as if you had rheumatism and your perspiration will smell like a brimstone factory. Chemicalize yourself with the right sort of feeling. Learn to do what you want to with yourself and you will have no trouble in making plants, or anything else, stand up to time."

Agnes stood by silent. Her face had been wrinkled and she had been on the point of assisting Hi-Timmy. She had refrained from helping with her hands though all the while striving to inoculate him through her mind, with will-forcing methods, though for months she had been realizing that the real way to help is to open avenues of self-help. Why, she was aching as if wrenches were being applied to her body! Was she so poor a chemist of embodiment as that,—to encase her soul in a poor frail body instead of a glad and

healthy one? Right here there came to her another link in the chain of her understanding in relation to her living the life,—that wholly upon the coördination existing between each muscle and the brain centre controlling it, depends the expression of thought which is, at once, the thread of continuity and the fibre of the instrument. She began to realize the internal meaning of Tom's words, spoken to her long ago, "You abhor nothing that you do not fear," and saw that to doubt, for one minute, one's right to possess the most beautiful in daily life, to the outermost periphery, is to lose sight of the God that thrills in us and through us. "If we can perceive beauty in everything of God's doings, we may argue that we have reached the true perception of universal law."

In that moment was revealed to her that what had seemed vicarious suffering was but the expression of kinship. As in a flash, the picture of Jesus in the temple, with his earnest speaking face, came before her, and she could hear him say, "Don't you understand now why I came into the world?"

Watching Hi-Timmy in his crudity grow out of his passion and his face become serene and noble through the aspiration of right doing, there sang in her heart the words that she had loved, as a little child, before her mind was enshrouded in the world's strained ideas of monstrous brutality towards the Liver of the Life and the Redeemer through example,—

"I think, when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus walked among men,
How he called little children as lambs to his fold,
I should like to have been with him then."

CHAPTER XXXV.

*"I lift my cap to beauty,
I lift my cap to love;
I bow before my duty,
And know that God's above!
My heart, through shining arches
Of leaf and blossom goes;
My soul, triumphant, marches,
Through life to life's repose.
And I, through all this glory
Nor know nor fear my fate,—
The great things are so simple,
The simple are so great."*

Fred G. Bowles.

"Tom, I am *absolutely obliged* to have some men about me." Mattee Sue pulled out a big box of neckties and proceeded to tie one under her husband's unwilling chin.

"I don't like that one," he writhed, "I will not wear it. Besides, I have my dinner coat on."

"W-oh-er-w-y, that doesn't matter, dear, it is *simply* a part of the plan to straighten Agnes out," returned Mattee Sue, wickedly. "She knows you *despise* this tie, for you told me so before her, the day I brought it home from town and gave it to you. If you can make her *see* that a woman a man loves can even induce him to wear a necktie he doesn't like,—and no doubt she has heard that that is a stupendous piece of diplomacy,—if she sees *that*,—I don't see how she can *possibly* fail, though unconsciously, to wish to emulate like proceedings on a subject especially her own. So now, dear, as

you really *don't* look half bad, I am sure, that, for Agnes' sake, you will keep it on!"

Tom tugged inanely at the tie for a second, then weakened and laughed.

"I declare, Red-bird, you are making a perfect softy out of me." For an instant there was a sweet silence from which Mattee Sue emerged rapturously happy, remarking critically,

"Your mouth grows better looking every day. The lips were held too close together before I married you, as if one would have to saw through steel gates to change your will. You see, the position of your mouth in the act of osculation, rounds it, and—"

"Here goes for more improvement!" The process was repeated. "Yes, Red-bird, you surely are making me soft!"

"Oh, no, Tom, I have not even *begun* on you yet," giving a little final twitch to her radiant scarlet gown. "And now about the men, dear!"

"Mattee Sue, you're crazy!"

"No, indeed! It's just a part of this plan of mine, for Agnes' sake, to teach her how to *objectify*, you know! Just get a good lot of samples for me and I will test them out before her just as I am showing you these." She spread a lot of dress samples before his puzzled gaze.

"What do you mean!"—jealously,—“I hope, Mattee Sue, you are not finding my company insufficient,—”

"Tush and Bimmy Bimkins, you treasure!" Mattee Sue hugged him. "Get me the men and we will see. Agnes is like a child I knew, who found the picture of a donkey in her primer, and when finally she saw a real one, vigorously and with mighty squalls, denounced it as no donkey, because it didn't seem to her like the paper one. She writes about men, and, in

manuscript they do as she pleases. Of *course*, that *pleases* a woman *very* much,—to have them do just what she wants them to. You don't always get that in real life,—except from such darlings as you!"

Delicately, she adjusted the ugly necktie, hiding the flash of merriment by lowering her radiant eyes to his coat collar. "So, w'en it takes so much trouble—and it really does, you know,—to find out w'ether real men are good for anything or not, she grows tired of them and goes back to paper dolls. She can shut her paper heroes up in a desk w'en she gets puzzled over their methods. You can't do that to real men. They make such an awful fuss you can't even get the cover down. They are sure to pop up just as you think you are turning the key on them. Now if she can see me with them and take them in hand and put them, *every one*, just w'ere they belong, it will be a *very* great help."

"She can gain plenty of information watching us." Again Tom tugged faintly at his necktie, but again relented.

"W-oh-w-er-y, possibly so,"—coolly, "but you don't care, so we save Agnes."

"Save Agnes, you little tyrant." He hugged Mattee Sue, this time so enthusiastically that her hair tumbled down and she had to do it up again before sparkling into the dining-room with her plumage of the semi-tropical clime adding charm and vitality to the sedateness of the somewhat stately household, and leading Tom, with a vivid four-in-hand streaming down the white shirt front of his evening dress.

"The proverbial monkey on a stick, father," he said grimly, as his entrance was hailed with laughter. "Did mother put you through the tricks and stunts of initiation when you were first married?"

"Yes, laddie," laughed Mr. Landell, "and forever since."

Mattee Sue drew down her father-in-law's head and kissed its silvered crown as she passed to her place.

"Oh, crown of glory," she whispered softly. "Isn't it, mother!"

Affectionately she squeezed Mrs. Landell's hand before she took her seat.

"What do you say, mother, to my bringing Dick Brentford to dinner to-morrow night? I saw him the other day in town. He is conducting some experiments that have brought him East for awhile."

"I wish you would. I miss the young people you and Agnes used to bring about us. Agnes has been altogether too quiet since Alicia is no longer here to give her the zest of companionship. I hope you will inspire her, little bride."

"I thank you, mother," said Tom with a stiffness Mattee Sue covered by her enthusiastic response. "We must make cotton while the sun shines," she concluded, "for no one knows how soon we shall flit over to Lodesminster to nest."

Agnes' heart gave a quick throb, followed by sense of darkness and loss.

"Are you really going away, my little Mattee Sue?" she said sadly. "How I love to speak your name. It fascinated me the first time I saw it in the old brown rhetoric. I shall miss calling it through the halls, for since you have come to us, it seems as if you had always been with us, Mattee Sue!"

Mattee Sue laughed gaily.

"I am *ever* so much obliged to you for the compliment and I am glad some one likes that dreadful up-country fashion of fastening two names together. I confess, I don't. It is the bore of my existence. The coast people laugh at us for doing it, though it is considered wholly Southern instead of being just a localism. I want to be called Elizabeth. I love that name!"

"My Mona Lise. Isn't that near enough?" said Tom.

"You will have to dignify me by some other name than that tit-tat-two, if I am to take any standing as the wife of a scientist! But really, Agnes, it is not at all settled about our going to Lodesminster. Dr. Wehr thinks it will dissociate the children from old associations, and be far more to their advantage to have the school here."

"Why not send for Mevin to make us a visit and thrash out the question?" said Mr. Landell.

Agnes rose quickly and preceded the family to the library, a sweet radiance illumining her face. Mattee Sue, walking on behind her, with her husband, grabbed him by the coat sleeve and, with an excited little gurgle, whispered,

"I've caught the terrapin for Agnes' stew."

Then, with a merry attempt at doggerel, she completed the sentence softly, in rhyme,—

"And before she knows it, she shall eat it, too."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

*"He who would climb the high white peaks of peace
Must first have plumbed pain's nethermost abyss."*

THE look Mattee Sue had discerned on Philip Herman's face was still more noticeable the next evening as, after service, he went into the grove adjoining the house where he and his mother lived.

Struggling back to life and its actualities, he had descended from the lonely mountain cottage to teach the realities of life to the people of Beneby. With each succeeding moon, the phoenix that rose from the spiritual fire which burned that memorable night at the old church had grown; but he himself felt like a dead thing. He never had been alive since that day he now was recalling for the thousandth time—the day when a bit of paper had heralded to him, as it had to the world, his entrance into the ranks of paupers.

That dreadful day! He remembered lying motionless for hours, while the gnomes of darkness stole over the quiet house, and his mother's eyes flashed from out the gloom like burning coals of fire. He heard the wind rise and fall in the chimney, and a fox scream, as, frightened, it ran near the house on its way to its forest coverts. Clouds scudded across the sky, and with an increasing horror at the thought of facing life with the brand of the beggar on his brow, he watched the 'gray fingers of the dawn clutching at the morning stars.' He could not forget! Nay, he never intended to forget.

This evening he was living it all again and the grove was his garden of Gethsemane.

For a thousandth time he recalled himself a fair-haired boy in a home of affluence, of which intelligence was the guiding star; then the years of intense emotionalism at college when he was laved in a sea of suggestion. He remembered kneeling for hours in his chamber, contemplating, as the ultimate of spiritual power, the limited conceptions of a man-made spirit. He had dreamed of drawing all men to him,—not a few fishermen, but scholars and statesmen. When he had felt himself prepared and equipped with what he considered incontrovertible proofs of truth, he entered the ministry without having gained one glimpse of reality, encompassed with hot imaginings of the brain which he had mistaken—oh the pity of it!—for spiritual vision.

With a rude awakening, he found himself involved in commercialism less dignified than that of the market. At the meeting places of ministers, white-faced men had plucked him by the sleeve to say with voices quivering with hunger and fear,

“Speak a word for me, brother, and get me a chance to supply this week. My wife is sick and I have no bread.”

“A travesty on the name,” he had exclaimed impatiently as he turned from these hawkers in the temple, believing himself their superior.

Meanwhile disgust was growing into wrath that theology and Christ-teaching should be so widely divergent that those speaking the one language could scarce understand the other.

As the money, which to him was but a bauble, had misted away, for the first time he had made a definite move toward the clerical business, as he had come, sarcastically, to name it. To his surprise, he had found himself, also, in the group of white-faced men who wait and fear and starve.

As his dollars had dwindled, his spiritual perceptions became more and more awakened, but still rooted in disgust. As he had looked into the black ooze he thought the grave of his faith, he had found life therein. Stirring toward the light were the seeds of pure religion striking root deep into his experience. Their stems shot up, straight and strong, through traditional misconception. He saw their leaves lie full and fair, like lily pads, upon the bosom of research and watched the flowers open to the light.

The more he thought upon this wonderful creation emerging slowly from human interpretation, the more he withheld himself from any promises that compelled fixation of outward expression of action or of speech.

So he lived these days, too nearly alert to sink again into his bed of ooze but, for the time, too inhibited by this new revealment to bring flower to fruit within himself.

When less than a hundred dollars lay between them and absolute penury, he had fallen ill, and when into the infinite spaces his mother called for help, and, out of the infinite spaces, help came, he had resented it, and had insulted her for summoning it. Even now, the horror of the call stood between them. Everything heralded his shame, and nothing could stifle the clarion call that he was a pauper.

Then came Agnes! Mingled with a fierce hatred of her, was a dumb adoration that, although with crude methods, mayhap, still she had saved him from himself; forced him to the expression of the best within him; urged the correspondence of his noblest thought with his noblest deed, instead of permitting him to check his growth in the nursery of his despair. Yet, even as he thought of her, hatred surged through him, and, silhouetted against the darkening shadows of his mind, venomous spectres moved, pointing their

poisoned shafts against her, or holding forth robes of influence wherewith to enwrap her with their folds, or suffocating her with the chloroforming anæsthesia of his unkind thought. The panorama of his mind rolled before him as never before. He stood appalled as he saw the forces of his resentment, marshalling like troops, sweeping over a field of battle from out the ambush of his own unkindness, striving to turn into shambles of remorse and heartache and consequent depletion of health and courage the life of the one who had been, whether wise in her methods or not, a saviour unto him.

Breathless, he stood before this revelation of what resentment, whether directed or undirected, may mean to the object upon which it falls!

He had forced his way on, through mud and ooze, growing towards the light. He had done his best to speak without hypocrisy and give spiritual food to starving hearts. He had lived truth as he knew it, and had refused to quibble with it. But as he saw his mind this night, he was convinced that if a larger revelation did not come to him now, discouragement and shame would kill his message and that he must die with it.

Strains of Mendelssohn's aria were wafted through the open window of the room where his mother was singing. The exquisite motif, "If with all your hearts ye truly seek him," caught in the meshes of his mind, as a floating gossamer catches on the hair of him who strolls the forest on an autumn day, nor would it disentangle itself.

"There must be light!" he said to himself. "I must clear my mind and free my soul from this horrible suffocation of spirit!"

The rising breeze stirred the bare branches; the silver moonlight played into the garden and fell upon his hand like a caress. He noted it vaguely, but as it lingered there insistently, it enmeshed itself in his mind

as the melody had done. It moved upon his hand, flecked by the undulating boughs. A honey-combed shadow wove its message into that of his mother's voice and recalled her one-time words—

“Not as a steward dispensing food and drink, is the God your consciousness should cherish. He is the Father of your energy; the Unit of your manifestation; the Mother of your potency, brooding over the chaos that is being loved and cherished into the manifested you. Know that your every cell is life. Be still and Know that I Am God.”

“Every cell of my being,” he mused, watching the cell-shaped shadow move and change shape upon his hand, “brooding over the chaos which is being born into me,—inseparable from all my brothers. Through this Me, shall I learn to deal understandingly with all expressions of life. *I* may be the way, the truth, the life to others if I understand. As I am led, so may I lead others out of disgust and hatred into control, tolerance, endurance and into faith in what they cannot, as yet, see. Moment by moment the personal falls away, and I realize that I stand upon eternal verities. External assumption is always disintegrated by the power of internal possession. I have cavilled, repudiated, scorned meekness as lack of assertion expressing in paucity and poverty. Instead, it is the strength of unity. The God I have been proclaiming is an effigy of myself; the liberty I have heralded is the bondage of slaves. From independence I have been thrown into the chains of dependence to be brought into my birthright of interdependence. My evil circumstances were created in the chaos of my own unconscious selection; but conscious choice is my inheritance and henceforth shall be involved in my creations. As blood and lungs and heart and life, so are we inseparable—God and I. My life has lacked ger-

minating power, for never, till now, has the soul of my desire expressed above the mental or the emotional. Philip Herman, declare the man you truly are!"

With illumination now, he looked upon the little cell-shaped shadow, still moving on his hand. Then he closed his eyes tightly against the rush of burning pain that pierced his eyeballs.

"Every cell, God! My Mother!" He went into the house.

Mrs. Herman was placing Gaul's "Holy City" upon the piano rack. Philip crossed the room and stood beside her.

"My Mother!" he said, after a silence, slowly and with tender reverence, "My Mother!"

Mrs. Herman did not speak. She looked at him with love-illuminated eyes.

Philip gathered his mail and left the house. Through the open window, his mother's voice followed him,—

"Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man, the things prepared for them that love Him."

He strode along the well-trodden footpath of the village common to the railroad station, whose lights twinkled some quarter of a mile away. He held his mail firmly in a hand whose arm swung easily, after the manner of a man seeking thorough exercise. Heretofore, any happiness he experienced had partaken of blind ecstasy. Now it was the heavenly contemplation of one who sees. His pace was rhythmic, instead of unexpectedly swinging out of balance as his mind was swayed by waves of depression or exaltation. The triumph of spirit pervaded his being and his hand kept time to the music of his heart's release.

Suddenly a peculiar p'st was heard, and the paper extending farthest from his hand was jarred. Look-

ing down, he saw that its extreme edge had been pierced by a bullet. At the same time he heard boyish giggles behind him.

"Gee!" One of the boys approached him as he turned. "I didn't think he could do it! I've lost five sticks of gum by that shot of his! I bet the wrong way, you see!"

"How do you do!" Good-naturedly Mr. Herman greeted the newcomers, aged, respectively, from ten to fourteen. "What is that? Sling shot? Halloo, Hi-Timmy, you here, too!"

Hi-Timmy Tidmouse, even with his months and years of tender training, was a seclusive little mortal, and was seldom, of his own choice, with other boys. He did not reply; but his silence passed unnoticed in the chattering of the other two who proudly displayed new parlor rifles.

Taking one of the weapons, Philip examined it with interest, the boys anxiously awaiting his approval of their newly-acquired treasures.

"They are fine weapons," he continued, "so fine they are capable of doing a great deal of harm. Which of you made so accurate a shot, Roger, you?"

"Yes, sir, and I twig lots of robins, too, and almost always get them."

"You must like to work in your father's garden picking bugs from the vegetables. Probably you wouldn't have to do that, if you boys would let the birds alone."

"I didn't know that!" Roger tried to catch step with Philip, while the other two little fellows trotted comfortably along on the other side. "I won't kill any more of them, then."

"Here we are at the station. I'm glad you caught up with me and very glad that you spared me my hand."

Be careful with your shooting. I assure you it is unsafe. Good night!"

He stepped up to the mail car as the green and red signal lights flashed in the frosty air and the train came thundering down the tracks.

As he stood there, Mr. Landell's car whirled up to the steps, deposited Dr. Brentford, and moved swiftly away.

"Come on," said the eldest of the boys. "He's awful nice, but I wouldn't believe he'd be such a muff about shooting! Hi-Timmy, want a try? It's a shame you haven't one."

The rifle changed hands, and, in the twinkling of an eye, was primed.

"I bet you my new football you can't hit the side of that car,—oh, gee"—for with the uncanny accuracy often exhibited by the novice, the ball ploughed its way to the bull's-eye, which was the flesh of the man who had just seated himself by an open window of the train. As the train swung round the curve, the boys saw the victim throw up his hands and fall back; then night concealed the next chapter in the dreadful tragedy.

"Roger Trowbridge, you've gone and done it!" cried the smallest boy, "You've given your gun to that fellow that don't know how to shoot. He's shot that man and they'll hang us all—"

"Shut up!" said Roger. The sweat ran from his forehead. "Can't anybody put it on us if you don't peach!"

"Us! I didn't do it!" sobbed little Jeff Parmelee.

"We were all together!"

"If I'd done it, I'd say so; but I didn't, I didn't, I didn't!"

"If you tell who did it, you'll get Hi-Timmy hung, then you'll be a murderer, sure enough. They may

nab us and string us to a telegraph pole. Jeff Parmelee, you'd better scoot!" and fully as frightened as if the weapon had been in his own hands, Roger Trowbridge snatched his gun from Hi-Timmy's unresisting hands and ran home. He crept up the back stairs and into bed, where he crouched, under cover, listening with growing horror for the expected mob to burst into the room and drag him to the nearest tree—as the papers said it was the custom of mobs to do.

Jeff Parmelee, being only ten years old, had fled to his mother and was sobbing out the whole terrible story on her loving breast.

Thus was Hi-Timmy left alone. He had joined the boys, incidentally, on his way to take a tube of paint to Amy Burton. He had earned it that afternoon by blacking Mr. Tom's many pairs of boots, and was taking her a big bag of chocolate drops into the bargain. Now he stood appalled, crushed in his new-found lightness of heart. For an instant, the desire of the wild for flight, almost overpowered him; then there came the sweet scent of hemlock groves, and Mr. Tom's kind voice as it had said to him long ago, "Stand still, Hi-Timmy, there is a teacher inside of you, that will tell you what to do!"

Meanwhile, the car was in an uproar. The train had been stopped and a physician who lived near by summoned. He hastened to the injured man and bent over him with a professional solicitude which changed into the alarm and distress of a friend, as he saw the face.

"Dick Brentford! Old fellow, what does this mean!"

"Halloo, Bascombe!" Brentford looked up through half-shut lids into the eyes of a college chum. Then, in his usual manner, half cynicism, half a cry of searching unto despair,

"I shall soon know whether changed processes mean

disintegration with a permanence of idea, or annihilation—" he sank into unconsciousness.

"This is a quandary!" mused Bascombe aloud. "It is death to move him far—"

"Our house is across the common. I know my mother would say, 'take him there.' The hospital is too many miles away," said Philip.

A terrifying thought sped to his mind as he spoke. He recalled the merry little boys so free of evil intent—the dare-devil shooting—and pictured the desolation of remorse for some heart-broken lad.

"Yet, where shall blame be placed!" he sighed. "When human life is held so lightly, and nations call for gold and blood, teaching and compelling men to perpetuate the art of War."

Mrs. Herman met them at the door. A pallor overspread her face as she saw the man on the litter.

"Philip, this is the physician who first attended you at Mt. Nodel."

His attention thus attracted to the past, as in a nebula Philip saw Dick Brentford's face evolving from his mind, creeping slowly, feature by feature from the recesses of a consciousness he would have believed too comatose to register details, but not now received with hatred and disgust as it would have been before the moment of his renunciation.

"I knew his address once, but it's nickels to nuggets if I can find it," Dr. Bascombe was saying. "It's a fine thing if a man can't sit peaceably in a car without being blown up by fire-eaters!"

"Foreign bomb throwers are not the only misdirected energy abroad," returned Philip thoughtfully. "Much training of well-intentioned human material is necessary before we are safe. I feel sure no evil intent is back of this accident. While you are attend-

ing to details here, I will follow up a clue. It will not take me long."

In a few minutes, his hand upon the door-bell sent a peal of sound into the ears of a frightened lad hidden beneath blankets. Then there came low voices at the foot of the stairs; light footsteps not at all like those of a mob, a gentle tap to which he gave no response, and a reassuring call at the door. A tall figure entered the room, went to the bed, threw back the clothes, and gathered the terrified and quivering child in kindly arms.

"Tell me about it, Roger."

"It's circumstantial evidence, for it's my gun; but they can't hang me on that, can they?" The boy clung convulsively to Herman, who returned the terrified grip with a comforting embrace.

"Why circumstantial? Did you fire the shot?"

"I'll die before I'll tell!"

That was all Philip could win from the frightened lad.

"I won't peach," he whispered to his pillow, somewhat soothed, though still in an agony of terror, after Philip had left him in further pursuit of the truth.

A short time after Dr. Brentford had left the Landells', Tom went to his room. As he entered, he saw what seemed a wad of clothing huddled in a heap upon the floor. It was long since Hi-Timmy had been seen in any such attitude of abasement and at first Tom was nonplussed. As the light was flashed on, the heap moved and a haggard face dissociated itself from the mass. Tom watched it in puzzled silence, until, having reached a standing position, Hi-Timmy spoke.

"Mr. Tom, you know everything. What is life!"

"Life is God moving in us, Timmy."

"I've killed it! Tell me what to do!"

"You can't kill God. However it may seem to you.

Sometimes, because our eyes cannot follow the changes we say life has been killed, or that it is dead; but that is not so. Tell me what troubles you. Slowly, now, and I'll help you."

"If life stays in that man can he die?"

"What man? Tell me about it, Timmy? Whom do you think you have killed?"

"Tell God that man is alive!" shivered Timmy in a frenzy. "If God thinks he's alive maybe the man will think so too!"

There came a tap at the door. Mr. Herman had come direct from the Trowbridges' to acquaint the Landells of the tragedy.

Weeks passed. Every day Hi-Timmy went to the Hermans', and stealing into Richard Brentford's chamber, stood a moment with transfigured face, then softly stole away.

"It's life there, moving in him because You are in him, God," he said over and over, not in agony of self-condemnation, because Tom had shown him that would avail nothing. The heroism of the child's soul showed luminous against the renunciation of himself and any possible penalty to himself, throughout the whole horrible circumstance. It was the cry of his heart that life should be given to the one against whom, unwittingly, his hand had been directed,—life for him, and life more abundantly.

No one but Tom knew why the boy went daily to the chamber. It was through his kindly offices that the boy went and came unquestioned. Day by day his crude features became refined, the windows of his soul let forth the light that had always been within, ready to enkindle and illumine the manifestation. The thought was thinking through the expression, and a child of beautiful experience was living forth. Studying the sacredness of life and the right of each soul

to hold to its chosen embodiment till, of itself, ready to use another, he invoked life in the best form for the man he had injured, and, in so doing, found it more abundantly for himself.

Meanwhile, for Dr. Bascombe had not put Richard Brentford's name on record, the invalid's personal relations to the world remained hidden, and his mentality only now and then peeped sluggishly in and out of its stupor.

One day, after another fruitless visit to Dr. Bascombe's office, and a thorough search through the helter-skelter mass of cards the kind-hearted but careless-habited physician threw out for his inspection, Philip returned home. As he entered the sick room, the man on the bed turned heavily and opened unseeing eyes. As they moved vacantly over the room they drifted to Philip's face. A dull light crept into them which grew in intensity until they fixed themselves virulently upon him.

"Charity!" he said between his teeth. "There is no such thing! It is every man for himself and annihilation for us all!"

Philip stood looking down at the man who, awakened to the present, raised himself upon his elbow and continued in tones that seethed with hatred,

"You priestly hypocrites! Every trick you teach, pretendedly of the spirit, is wormed out of your desire for personal gain."

Still Philip looked at him. Not his thought, but his life as to righteousness called to the embittered man to rise from his slough and stand upon his feet.

"I saw a class of thirty girls, once, with downcast eyes and humility according to book, move sinuously across the room, skirts floppy, like cassocks, and a gas lighter for the Host. They presented the processional to perfection. No train of priests could equal them

for unctiousness. They looked, every one, like my uncle, even to the raising of their eyes to a heaven (that is not there) on the ictus of the organ stroke and letting them fall with mock humility on the recurrence of the rhythm."

Philip listened silently, but the frenzied man went on,

"He would deceive St. Peter by his studied sanctity. He has another specialty. He is a thief. What struck me?"

"A ball from a parlor rifle that a little child was playing with."

"I bear him only one grudge—that he didn't complete his work. Send for my uncle. He is a scoundrel and I want to tell him so!"

The moment of superficial strength had passed. The glaze of unconsciousness stole over his eyes, his head sank to the pillow, and he lay silent; but where to find the uncle, no one knew.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"We can only obey our own polarity."

Emerson.

THE horror of the Landells at the accident to their dinner guest and the mystery surrounding his family connections, as well as their sympathy for the Hermans and their liking for the sufferer caused them to keep closely in touch with conditions at the parsonage.

Meanwhile, Agnes' love for Mevin had become a rare sweet song singing into her life. Although she did not see him and found within herself an almost unsurmountable barrier to forcing or even planning a meeting with him she so often had rebuffed, still, she found comradeship in knowing of his plans, and, in spirit with him, living toward their fruition. In this love, growing in the spirit as rarely as the love of God grows in the heart, she found herself living more largely and more comprehendingly. Where she had seen darkness, he was bringing her light; where she had felt killing frosts, there was blooming through his love the glory of tropic warmth; when she looked out to his soul, she found his looking into hers.

Coming in one day from a walk, filled with vitality and peace, she met Mattee Sue.

"Have you heard from Dr. Brentford to-day?" asked the little sister.

"I have not. Do you never forget any one, dear Little Sister? You carry humanity on your bosom as a wood-nymph bears a daffodil upon her breast, laughing as you go, and with an exquisite simplicity that

makes it seem as if you were but blowing the fluff from the dandelion instead of lifting burdens. Ah, Little Sister, indeed

‘The great things are so simple
The simple are so great!’

and the beauty of it is, with you there are no depressions in between,— ”

“Oh, that’s because I’m too shallow for life to dig any into me.”

“What is the secret, is it just temperament, or,— ” Agnes continued.

“W’y, I just have faith!” The natural buoyancy of the girlish figure became vitalized with a strength that was splendid. “And if I ever get to a place w’en I don’t know w’at to have faith in and can’t seem to get to God, I just have faith in faith! I hear Dr. Brentford is worse. If you go there to inquire soon, I’d be *so very much obliged* if you will take my stylographic pens to the village to be mended. They are out of fix, every one.”

“*Out of fix*, Red-bird,” laughed Tom, entering the room as his wife was speaking, “Out of fix!”

“W-oh-we-y, I should feel *fearfully* lonesome in this land of jewelled expression if I couldn’t cuddle down into the cradle of some of Maum Henny’s homely sayings,” her laughter bubbling bravely through a wave of home-sickness in the midst of the never-failing stateliness which surrounded her.

“I *simply couldn’t stand it*,” she whispered to herself, sometimes, “if they didn’t show in everything they do that they *love* me!”

“Say it all you please, Red-bird,” said Mr. Landell, lovingly. “It’s a mighty poor cultivation that makes perfection a bugbear.”

Mattee Sue jumped from her seat at table and, running round to Mr. Landell's place, snuggled her face into his beautiful white hair, as she so often loved to do.

"Oh, crown of glory," she whispered lovingly. "Not only your wonderful hair, father, but *you!* Yes," she continued, flitting back to her seat, "I've gummed up every one of those convenient, obstinate pens and had to use a paint brush you left in my room, Agnes, w'en you were working on those gold letters,—to write to mauma with. I took your gold stuff and painted 'I love you. Pens all broken but I'm safe!' on a sheet of paper and sent it. She will be frightened into motion-picture jiggles if she doesn't hear from me every day."

"Such a message seems far from reassuring," laughed Mrs. Landell, "'I'm safe!' Has there been any danger!"

"And then telegrams and letters full of impudence, eh, you little bundle of wickedness," interpolated Tom. "Mattee Sue, that letter you sent me is the very worst I ever received!"

"I meant it to be!" roguishly, "and w'enever you put X-rays on my proceedings you may expect its brothers and sisters to follow suit!"

Tom leaned back in his chair despairingly.

"The king of beasts is no longer monarch in his lair," laughed Mr. Landell, enjoying the repartee, "Lie down, laddie!"

"Not I, father!" A bit of choler showed itself through Tom's banter.

"No, you precious!" Prettily, Mattee Sue tipped her fingers to her lips and whiffed him a kiss across the table. "Father Landell, I shall emulate w'at I have seen of this ideal home, and coöperate, father, coöperate!"

"It's a fearfully bad precedent,—leading your parents to expect to hear from you every day," said Tom, recovering himself. "Now, if they do not hear, they will worry. Make it uncertain from the first, and pretty soon, they won't mind."

"I shall not adopt that plan with them, as I have begun the other way." Mattee Sue was indefatigable in finding new material. "But dear, I certainly will recall your advice w'en away from you!"

"You are the wickedest little witch I ever knew," sighed Tom. "It won't do to give up, for then, surely, I should be the dancing bear led round by the nose; but it takes a lot of will-power not to capitulate—a lot of it! Your people don't write to you every day, do they!"

"W-oh-er-wy, it is not necessary, because they know Sister Agnes has a telescopic eye and can see w'at they are doing. Tell me, Agnes, w'y you haven't been seeing spooks and intelligences since I came. You are certainly disappointing! How do you do it, anyway! I think it is perfectly wonderful, don't you, father!" Then, insistently, "How do you do it, sister!"

"I wish I understood; then I should never fail."

"Won't you explain it, father? You are so *very wise*, I'm sure you know!"

"It is for the same reason that we do not always obtain messages over wireless, Red-bird. Both the sending and receiving stations must be in attune, with no cross currents to interrupt. None can hear who are not attuned. It is very simple, the real unfoldment, the other development is full of doubts and quagmires. It tends to arrest spiritual inspiration; the real holds the organism responsive to what is permanent, within. All things tend for good when directed by the spirit of goodness; but strength, power and ability are impersonal and, until they have a divine motive behind them,

they are destructive. In patience one by one the individual gathers up the lines of power until he holds them firmly in his possession."

"Father," said Tom, "do you not think that clair-audience and clairvoyance are the heritage of the human family which in time all will utilize?"

"I do. Where we place those whose vocabularies are insufficient for their needs, we may place the psychic who cannot demonstrate sequentially. I use the word psychic, not in the sense of spiritual, but as on the plane of phenomena and one of the phases of material demonstration. It is a disintegrating phase, for though it seems to extend to the circumference it disturbs the centre, holding to which, an infinitely large circumference is possible."

"What do you mean by that?" questioned Mattee Sue.

"A psychic—or one who depends on psychic methods for unfoldment,—constantly extends eyes and ears of mind toward influences other than the Source. During this process will and reason lie inert. The subject—for soon he is rightly called this—becomes exposed to external forces of all sorts without the intelligence being awake to its power and right of selection. Fortunate for him, if his inherent sense of choice protects him from unspeakable horrors! It is like opening your jewel casket on the highway, little Red-bird, and going away, leaving it to be seized upon by any one who passes by."

"What is that centre, father?"

"The same Mind which is in Christ Jesus the Lord."

"How can we find that Centre?"

"Spiritual power does not force its way. It is to be discerned only through active desire and aspiration thereof. It retires before listenings and visionings gained through controls or possessions or obsessions.

At no time is the dependent psychic unfoldment an unfailingly reliable source of wisdom."

"Many consider that the psychic state is due to brain discoördination caused by unequal motion of cell tissues," said Tom.

"Our expression always manifests energy unequally. To my understanding, this explains why the body is left behind in so-called death. We are not consistently conscious throughout our beings. That is, we have not attained to complete consciousness, which is the

'Far-off divine event,
Towards which the whole creation moves.'

"I have noted," said Agnes, "that generally when I have visions—not of soul which strengthen—but psychic flashes—I am depleted."

"You become a medium and the manifestation uses your forces. The crossing of telephone wires is a trite but good illustration of the way these forces, undirected by your Self, may act, even to the defeat of purpose. Other mentalities or messages cutting in; wires crossed; getting another message—are of the same import, whether in telephonic despatch or in other voicings of Wisdom. When, depleted, you vision, your will-forcing methods are not aligned with universal intelligence and you are negatively receptive to all kinds of inundations from persons, conditions and invisibles, bad and good. When, in health and wisdom, you see and know—and I assure you, physical health is but one expression thereof—it is because, as an adept, you are aligned with, and intelligently receptive to, messages of real spiritual power. Revelations from this source are always reliable because an extension, in sequence, of the reason we glorify. The scroll of the law is unrolled into realms beyond the scope of the mentality. The former condition partakes, in no sense,

of the spiritual, because it echoes other and generally conflicting mentalities; the latter is the natural growth of the pure in heart, who, having entered the kingdom of righteousness, become as a little child and see God."

"I have tried to be that," said Agnes. "Why, then, have I not been able inherently to select my visions wiselier? See how often I catered to Cousin Matilda's whims, and how nearly I failed Tom!" She turned white. "Oh, that night!" she shuddered. "When there came the call of something undefinable, as to understanding, but reassuring, as to experience; when something in my mind seemed to link hand with reason, as it were an elder sister, and draw it up into knowledge of its higher possibilities. I analyzed nothing, then. I resisted till I acted. Now, as I regard the experience in the light of its fulfilment, I know I was like one on a mountain, motionless before vistas never to be seen from valleys or plateaus below. The stillness of great heights enclosed me, as, having climbed out of the pitch and tar of indecision, I penetrated spaces beyond the closed doors where that figure lay, far beyond it, to the starting point of that journey of thought that was striving to express itself to me—a potent petition in a sea of flame!"

She trembled and ceased speaking, then began again.

"Oh, the fallacy of my reasoning,—that the light had to have a cause; therefore, as I saw no cause, there could be no light!"

"I was at fault, Agnes!" Tom's face grew white, too. "I begged you to be guided only by reason—good advice had it not disdained your transcendent powers—because, I could not, myself, follow them from premise to conclusion. I was following law; but to me, the law stopped at the point I did. I scorned the aid of the soul's imagery—living instrument of truth. I needed teaching, and I chose to receive my lesson as

it was sent to me! I had time to think, that night, and I thought as never before.—Go on, father, answer Agnes in your own way.”

“You have been very zealous,” Mr. Landell turned to Agnes, “and perhaps not always patient with processes. Through your emotional intensity, and latterly through your emotional repression, you have been drawn insidiously into listening for direction—for leadings. Sometimes, only sometimes, dearest, you have allowed your intelligence to drowse. Thus you have become sensitive to all that impinges from without—the undesirable as well as the desirable. You have realized this, and in fierce desire to hold yourself positive, you have held your *mentality* before your vision and mirrored that instead of the Infinite. Thus has your mentality confused and blurred the image the soul presents.”

“Indeed, we are pattern-makers in the stillness and the invisible, of what we represent in the temporal! Give me more reasons, as to why I am sometimes right and sometimes wrong.”

“The *reason*, sweet puzzler, is that your loving service has been the cause of your close touch with the unseen; but *indiscriminate* service has opened the door for indiscriminate obsessions.”

“What are spirits, Father Landell?”

“After much thought and experience, I have come to feel—and it gives me great peace—that they, as well as ourselves, are the power of God, in form. When, what we call the physical body, disappears, through death, the line of action of the soul is not necessarily changed. It works on its chosen lines and uncoils a new embodiment, born of its active desires. It may hold the individuality as long as it chooses, and work where it chooses. If individuality no longer seems vital, the soul may return to the bosom of the

Great Infinite. It is comparatively easy for some receptive organisms, here, to follow this uncoiling to the extent of seeing souls, that, though passed out of this body, still are physically bound. It takes the pure living of the life to enable one, still in the material body, to reach beyond the material and psychic stages of consciousness, to meet those who have passed these stages and find it difficult to return to the slow, heavily vibrating denseness of the physical atmosphere, which is a part of the physical coil of the unfolding idea. Still, impressions and messages constantly make their way to us from them, and sometimes, a vision of the soul."

"How have I been so mercifully protected from many of the worst phases of subjectives?" put in Agnes.

The never-failing current of your thought and will has been, God—even though unknown and not understood,—still, God. Your unconscious selection follows the trend of your conscious training. Our lives are moulded thoughts. Indecision, doubt, restlessness, questioning of methods after well-considered choice has been made—lead to valleys of vision, instead of to mountain tops."

"How may I assure myself of the wisdom of the mountain tops?"

" 'Live so absolutely in the present that your understanding of the present is absolutely perfect,' " he quoted.

"W'y, Father Landell, mustn't one think of heaven!" burst forth Mattee Sue, astounded.

"This is the age of the individual. His ideal state is to be clean, alert, sensitive and keen of vision in the unseen realms of his nature, that he may know the kingdom of heaven that is within."

“How does Agnes get views of distant places and people?”

“Messages are transmitted through the nerves. The highest phenomenal manifestation of which we are informed, is light; but there is a morally spiritual radiation, ‘too fine in nature, and too intimate in action, for the power of any nerve fibre to transmit.’ It acts far above any phenomena of light and its centre is Wisdom which is ‘more moving than any motion.’ In that Light, behind the light, is the power of energy. Behind that—God!”

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"Thou must build upward to a height beyond thyself. But first, I would have thee, thyself, build with a square foundation, body and soul."
Nietzsche.

SOON after luncheon, Agnes took Mattee Sue's stylographic pens, together with her own, and started for the village. Her heart was singing with the joy of her father's understanding.

Before going to Mr. Dennett's, she stopped at the Hermans'. Philip was in the garden mulching bulbs, as indications pointed to a cold spell.

"I can thank you, to-day, for what you have done for me, Miss Landell," he said, advancing to greet her. "Though the elements within struggled mightily with me, in attaining to the liberty of God, I am achieving."

"I am glad."

Agnes spoke from out of the depths of her soul's tranquillity. The garden grew gradually very still. In the silence, spiritual enlightenment grew. The cross that had hung in every vision, with herself thereon, faded before her entrance into the kingdom opening.

In a moment, Philip, still in the light of his transfiguration, replied,

"It is, after all, so very simple! It is but to become as a little child!"

"That is all," said Agnes, softly, with the child face of Jesus before her, "As a little child."

There was a silence fraught with benediction for them both.

"Do you recall the day you said to me 'The church has contained the nucleus of truth these thousands of years. It has enfolded the uses of creative power in the most sacred manner known to the growing understanding of its priests and priestesses.' I could not believe it then. I know it now. I realize that just to meet together, in the name of God, is to hold the world to that ideal."

"Even among those groups where form and ceremonial have been most observed, in all the centuries of organized worship, the seeds of truth have been held, protected, nurtured, and sometimes revealed; light falling on it, Holy Spirit of Life brooding over it. Every century of this meeting together in search of life more abundant and the best methods of finding and expressing it, has, though often making use of sense methods, tended, through the dynamic power of the Ideal, to counter-impress the impressions made by sense ideals."

No weird or excessive enthusiasm colored her expression as she spoke, but the simple statement was vitalized with the strength that true impersonalism gives when he who loseth his life finds it in increasing beauty and glory.

"All this time, the same methods have prevailed—meditating in one place at specified seasons, for a length of time, with the mind dwelling—at least supposedly—on the coming of the Lord, in whatever form seemed in the hearts of the petitioners, best suited to the needs of the world, and actively thoughtful and intent on finding a working basis for the revelation, specified to meet the growth of each communion, and to evolve a finer conception of what *Lord*, means."

"So we all work together, we who are directly on the highest conceivable plane denying passing phases,

and we who, like Dr. Wehr, see that processes of growth are the strait path to heaven."

"When assent and dissent are silenced in us, perception awakes; spiritual truths are cognized and expressed with spiritual intent," returned Philip. "The foundations of the church are *not* rotten, as has been said. They are eternal verities reaching toward the light." He paused a moment, thoughtfully. "Will you go in to see my mother?"

"I thank you, not to-day. I came to inquire about Dr. Brentford."

"There seems little change. I wish we had a clue to his people."

The light of seership illumined Agnes' face.

"We shall know soon, I am sure."

"Heigh-o!" called a woman's voice. Looking up, Agnes saw Grace Jenkins hastening down the street, waving her hand vigorously.

"Let's go on together," she called loudly as she approached.

Agnes' heart gave a sickening thud as she said to herself, "I can't talk with her, she is so inconsequential!"

"Have you been here all season?" asked Grace, effusively.

"Right here," returned Agnes.

"How can you stick to one spot, so! You are positively abnormal! I couldn't do it, and, as for being alone, it gives me fits! I was quarantined for twelve hours, once! I had a rash and the doctor couldn't name it! Such an indignity to put on me when it was only oatmeal. Twelve hours alone! Just think of it!"

"Isn't dread of that more abnormal than wanting to be alone with God, once in a while?"

"Alone with God! I'd be scared to death if I

thought I was going to be alone with Him! It does very well to hear about it in the pulpit, but the real thing,—boo! Where are you going?"

"To Mr. Dennett's," said Agnes, patiently.—"To get some pens mended."

"Are all those yours? You always were a lavish creature! What were you doing at the Hermans'? Going to marry the Greek god?"

"I am not!" There was a wave of thankfulness in her heart at the assurance she felt in her reply.

"You ought to. You saved his life! You ought to give him yours, now, as a sort of return—the way people exchange wedding rings. Besides, the whole country expects it! You didn't see half I saw in the papers about that affair—though I tried to keep you up with it all—about your saving his life and supporting him, and getting him this place to preach, and running a new religion, so as to give him prestige in the country as head of a new faith—such a lot of stuff!—it was rich!—and all the headlines making him the high-monkey-monk and you the Richelieu or the Disraeli—what's the name of the play, anyway! You've simply *got* to marry him. You owe it to your character. Don't you care? You look as if it all had nothing to do with you!"

"I suppose it really hasn't," Agnes had a sense of apartness from the situation, which interested her, now, merely as it might a spectator. As never before, it seemed as if things were being done for her. A wonderful sense of protection enfolded her. She felt as if the ingredients she had provided for that strange comestible called consequences were being mixed with ingredients with which she had nothing to do; that they were being stirred in with the spices and sweets as well as the gluten grown in the experience grounds of other lives, mixed by the implements of coördina-

tion and changed by the heat of wisdom into something far other than the crude commodities that had been present in the stirring bowl of life at the beginning. She had her part,—oh yes; but it was only a part. The responsibility of the whole world was *not* hers, and her moral accountability was a joyous co-operation, not an individual burden.

She thought all this, while Grace was babbling on, puzzled at her lack of success in teasing Agnes, formerly so easy and enjoyable a pastime.

"I have it!" she was saying, "You are going to marry Dicky Brentford! That *would* be a match—nice and peppery, like chutney!"

"I am complimented that you consider me capable of interesting so many men."

"Why didn't they send him to the hospital! It's so old-fashioned, nowadays, to load oneself with other people's miseries. After he was so mean at Mount Nodel—I'd see him in a moving-picture reel, first!"

"The hemorrhages made it dangerous to move him so far,—and—they have loved to do it—that is all I can say."

"Well, to go back to *you*! It's no use to think you can love the God in everybody. You can't find Him in most people. You've got to love somebody to death, then be a fool and throw him over and live all the rest of your life without him, and make believe you are thrillingly happy, the way I've done, to know what love is—or isn't," she broke off suddenly. "A fool can give advice to a saint. I say—don't be a fool and bring yourself down on a level with me through believing that love and thinking about love are the same thing. Love isn't a patent fixture to be attached to any machine at pleasure. Love mates you with a man, not an idea! My notions are crude enough, perhaps, but I have *learned* what I am talking about. Like the

moaning of that steamer's whistle the day I stood face to face with death, there pulses through my heart, Love, thou art in one heart for me! God be merciful to me, a fool!"

She stopped, then began again,

"Faugh, Agnes, what you call love is like quack medicine—equally unadapted for insanity or measles. I'm in the fool stage and don't know any better than to take my medicine in whole doses; but do you take your own prescription and save yourself torture.—Why don't Dickey's people take him off the Hermans' hands?"

"No one seems to know anything about them—but we shall find them soon."

"Are you as queer as ever? I believe you have wheels in your head."

"I notice they keep going."

"Good, you're improving. It's lots more interesting to be scrappy once in a while. What do you suppose makes Dicky so disagreeable?"

"I think he is soul sick! You know he has thought a good deal,—"

"I don't see a bit of sense in it. Why can't people content themselves thinking like everybody else!"

Agnes opened her lips to reply; but closed them without speaking. Finally, "He has known so much of the material side of religion—"

"What other kind is there, pray! How you do make people sprain their brains to keep up with you!"

"Perhaps you know something about Dr. Brentford's family? You saw a good deal of him at the hotel?"

"La! I did ask about his people, once, and I did step into a hornet's nest. The experiences were similar! What are you doing inside yourself! You will be as nice and chatty as possible, then, suddenly, you

slam the door of your mind and leave those on the outside to make the best of it!—Come, stay with me at the hotel, to-night!” she interrupted herself. “It’s dreadfully creepy! I can’t go home with you, because Jack is here, he is apt to be ill—rheumatism—I wouldn’t want to take him to your house. Besides, he’s here on business that may keep him out late—do come!”

A tremor crept into her voice.

“I shan’t let him know you are there, but I shall know it—and—well, it will help me! There is Jack, now! Heigh-o, Jack, take me home. I don’t feel like walking. Don’t mention Dick Brentford before him,” she whispered hurriedly. “He has never seen him, but for some reason it puts him in a perfect fury even to hear his name.”

Jack Jenkins drove to the curbstone. He was years older than Grace. As Agnes met his eye, she ignored Grace’s warning, and with an impulse she did not try to control said, directly,

“Mr. Jenkins, I want the address of Richard Brentford’s people.”

Jenkins turned ghastly. He eyed her piercingly.

“You must go elsewhere for information, Miss Landell. It seems inhospitable to leave you here on the curbstone, but the trap has seats for two only.”

“I came out for the walk,” returned Agnes, grateful that she was to be left alone and happy in the sense of tranquillity that, instead of perturbation, was enfolding her.

“‘The sons of God are greater than their business, for He hath not put us in the world so much to do a certain work as to be a certain thing,’” she thought as she went her way. “Intuition should no more be shaken in its balance than should reason.”

Soon after dinner, as Grace had requested, she went

to the hotel. She was singing to herself something Mrs. Bryce had said to her—"You seem to be with us, nowadays." Had she not always been with them or had she been far away in the forest of the abstract, hiding from them all in doubt and distrust of herself?

She bowed her head to inhale the perfume of some roses Marian Fosby had sent her with these words:

"I am sending you these roses and you are wondering why. It is because I feel you should be compensated; for wherever I see you, spring, summer, autumn or winter, there is a shower of apple blossoms."

This thought gave her strength as she urged herself to be with Grace, and turned her attention from the fact that the wind was rising almost to a hurricane. Snugly protected in the cozy limousine, with windows closed, she did not notice, other than with a sense of protection the sighing of the pines always gave her, that they were almost screaming into the night, in their own rare language, warnings and petitionings alike. The darkness of the hotel oppressed her, but bravely, for Grace's sake, she put all sense of gloom aside, though she could but notice how very different its appearance from that of summer when the lake dimpled and danced in the sunshine. Excepting the L, all was dark. Beneby was a residential town, and, from October to May, rarely were there transient hotel visitors.

As she entered the room assigned her, next the one occupied by Grace, her gown seemed twitched by unseen hands and faint chucklings followed her startled gaze at the moving fabric. Could she remain here, tonight, friendship or no friendship!

She swept the impression aside, not with hands of flesh, for these could not avail, but with the power of the divine knowledge that sang, within her, God; Thou art the only power, and dost manifest only in good.

The air was close and she opened a window. The moaning of the trees sent terror through her by their almost human cries. She was about to close it when, from out the tumult of sounds rang forth, in the harmonies of the universe,

“He bringeth the wind out of His treasuries.”

She found herself glorying in its power, as Grace entered the room hastily.

“Oh, dearie,” and she busied herself in shaking out the furs Agnes had removed, “isn’t this the dreariest place! Look at this old carpet and that washstand—and see that oil cloth tacked before it, and that dreadful honeycomb spread! There isn’t a soul here, except the family and Jack,—what’s the matter?—” for Agnes’ face had turned crimson. “I hope you’re not falling in love with him. You were embarrassed enough when you met him this afternoon!”

“Grace, don’t be vulgar!” Agnes exclaimed impatiently, instantly regretting her outburst; but Grace laughed gleefully, always pleased when she succeeded in ruffling her friend’s calm.

“There is a terrible storm coming up,” Agnes continued, as a gust of wind sent one or two unfastened blinds banging to and fro. For the first time becoming conscious of the ferocity of the storm, she opened a window on the north side to close the shutters, but the gale blew in sheets of rain, drenching her outstretched arm. She was compelled to leave it noisily swinging, with rhythmic insistence, while constantly increasing blasts dashed the sleet against the glass. Suddenly, she raised her head and listened attentively.

“What is that dreadful noise!”

Grace sprang up, her face aflame.

“Jack must have come in ill.” Running into her own room she shut the door.

Left alone, the horrors of the night closed in upon

Agnes with renewed intensity. Scarcely had her friend disappeared, when other blinds burst, simultaneously, from their fastenings, slamming against the long windows in a large, high-ceiled bay that formed an alcove or sun-parlor. The impact shivered the glass, while rain and wind swept the room in gusty fury, catching the unusually long white curtains and overdraperies, whipping them out their entire length. With a spring, she caught them as they were about to settle upon the lighted gas jet, that, without a globe, flared and flickered on the side wall. Even in that second, the muslin had caught fire and the wind was contending with her to sweep it again upon the lighted jet.

With one arm she held the mass of surging material and, quickly turning off the gas, beat at the flames, that had crept but slowly along the cloth on account of the drenching it had received from the invading sleet. She called Grace. The noise of the storm drowned her voice or Grace was too much occupied to respond. She had lost her bearings and had no idea where lay the door through which Grace had made her exit. She did not continue the summons for she did not desire the presence of a man either maudlin or crazed with drink. She did not know the way to the caretakers' apartment, and long empty spaces extended between her and aid.

She did not know where to find the bell, or if the room was furnished with one, and she had heard enough about their uselessness, even in the halycon days of summer, to cause her to doubt their efficiency as a help-summoner, on this tempestuous winter night, at half after eleven o'clock, with all the world in bed. She had no matches, and meanwhile, having released the curtains, these were tossing in the gale, far into the spaces of the dark room, stretching out their lengths,

then falling, to whip out again, lashing the ceiling, the high walls, dragging down with a startling crash some bric-à-brac upon the mantel, and leaping at all that came within their reach with a rolling, wave-like motion that, to her strained ears, seemed like the beating of surges on ocean crags, while the downpour on the tin roof of the tower seemed like the cannonading of hostile hosts. The storm beat into the chamber, and the wind screamed, like a living thing, among the electric wires that hung low outside.

Trying, in vain, to maintain a hold upon the curtains, three times she felt her way about the room for matches. On the washstand was a match-safe, but it was empty. Still, with unabated fury, the sleet dashed to the furthest corner of the room. At length her hand touched an electric bell; but, if in working order, no one responded.

Then she thought of dragging the desk up to the broken windows, after a fashion battening down the curtains by its weight, thereby serving as a shield against the elements. The piece proved sufficiently large to cover the worst part of the breakage, for it was an old-fashioned bookcase and desk, combined. Fortunately, it was on rollers. To gain a better purchase upon it, she withdrew one of the drawers below the pigeon-holes. It was the work of a moment to dislodge it, for it was wedged in place by a piece of paper.

She had succeeded in wheeling the heavy article across the room and was about to push it into its new position, when a sound fell on her ear far transcending all the horrors of that awful night. Footsteps were stealthily approaching the window, whose wrecked condition made it useless in repelling an invasion. In a flash, she pictured the situation of the L where she was lodged. There, in the direction of the sound, was the iron fire-escape, and the footsteps were coming

nearer. She stood motionless, the envelope she had taken from the drawer held between her hands, which were pressed against her breast. As these helpless hands were crossed over her heart, impotent against a rapidly materializing danger, she faced the window. The long curtains, straightened out suddenly by the wind, caught and enfolded her. Draped, thus, in white, she stood in the middle of the apartment.

With every added complication, tranquillity had been gaining a steady victory over terror and now held her balanced, brave and serene, though surrounded by the turbulence of the elements.

Added to the heightening perils of the night, the groaning of the wires made potent appeal to the imagination. An arc-light that hung outside, beyond the range of her vision, swung forward, and for an instant its rays fell full upon her, shrouded as she was, in white. Its glare threw into bold relief the figure of a man approaching the window. With wonder that precluded speech or outcry, she recognized the face of Richard Brentford, who was at death's door at the Hermans' more than a mile away. It was framed, for a moment, before the open space, then a scream rent the air, as the lamp swung back beyond her sight.

"What is it!" Grace cried, running from the adjoining room, while, with sturdy poundings on the door, the manager and his wife sought entrance.

"What made you shriek so! It was the most blood-curdling cry I ever heard!" Grace exclaimed, as, having disentangled herself, Agnes admitted the manager and his wife.

"I made no outcry," said Agnes, steadily.

"Yes, you did, and a perfectly awful one."

"I did not scream. The call came from outside."

Her eye fell upon her hand, still clasping the paper

taken from the desk. An intent look came into her face.

“What is that!”

Impetuously, Grace seized upon the scrap of paper.

Tom had once said of her, that, if Grace Jenkins had but one value in life, it was to force issues at a time when others would be ashamed to ask questions. Now, inquisitively, she opened the envelope as if it were her own.

“It is a letter from Dick Brentford to his uncle, Howard Dunburn, Trenton, New Hampshire,” she exclaimed. “Why, this is the room Dr. Brentford always has when he comes here!”

Not answering this volley of words, Agnes turned to the manager.

“Will you telegraph to this address, that the recipient is to come at once to Rev. Philip Herman’s in the village, where his nephew lies critically ill. As for the events of this night, I tell you I have just seen Richard Brentford’s wraith!”

In a frenzy of terror Grace screamed and clung convulsively to her friend.

“I’m terribly frightened,” she sobbed. “Mr. Jenkins hasn’t come in yet. We thought we heard him, but it was a mistake. Let us go down-stairs with you, Mr. Winship. I am afraid to stay up here. Won’t you go out and hunt for him? I am afraid he is frozen. He told me he was going to the barber’s for a shave! All I could say to persuade him to stay home was no good. I knew it was going to be a blizzard.—And to take such a night—what does he want to shave his vandyke for, anyway!”

Talking garrulously, and clinging desperately to Mrs. Winship’s arm, she drew Agnes after her to the living-room of the caretaker, starting at every gust of wind and listening for the step that did not come.

Late dawn found her alternately watching for him and bemoaning his fate.

As best she could, Agnes ministered to her frantic friend, listening with earnest, reassuring sympathy to the terrified moans and sobs.

Morning came and, with it, calm from out the tempest.

With the milk train, en route for the city, came Richard Brentford's uncle in response to the telegram of the night.

Without announcement, Philip and the newcomer entered the sick chamber. The heavy lids of the man upon the bed lifted and eyes dull first with despair and then with hate fell upon them.

"Howard Dunburn! Come into the open! Thief! Coward! Where is my father's money!"

At the moment his denunciations cut the air, the telephone outside the door rang sharply, and a voice at the further end, audible to every one in the room, spoke—

"This is Beneby House. We have found Richard Brentford dead on the fire-escape, killed by a live electric wire."

The man on the bed heard the words. Stunned into silence, his vituperations died upon his lips. A far-sighted look dawned in Mrs. Herman's eyes as she heard the call.

Mr. Dunburn and Philip joined Dr. Bascombe and the coroner, and together went to the hotel.

The motor sped under crystal arches, for the trees were encased in sleet, and every twig was traced in filmy beauty against the sky. It was bitterly cold.

They entered the room Agnes had occupied. Outside the broken window stood the linemen, near a long-shaped mound of ice only just now beginning to melt as the sun peeped round the corner of the building and

set the cold brilliance asparkle with prismatic colors. Above this curious mound, out of which a face protruded, a broken electric wire was dangling. The end nearer the window pointed to the crystal mass like a finger of fate holding down the proof of uncanny things.

At the coroner's word, the icy pall was broken and the inert form lifted from the narrow platform and borne into the room. Seemingly, it was Dr. Brentford, lifeless, but undisfigured by the shaft.

A half-caught revelation struggled in Philip's eyes. Mr. Dunburn, as in the clutches of a nightmare, stood beside him.

Grace had been left alone, sleeping, in Mrs. Winship's sitting-room. After a while she roused, and, still drugged with slumber, staggered out of the room and up-stairs, with a half-delirious, half-dreaming idea that Jack had returned and was awaiting her.

Along the hall she sped, and in at the open door—one of many that lined the walls, and which she had mistaken as one leading to her room.

Stretched upon the bed she saw a gruesome thing, out of which all semblance of life had gone.

For an instant, she halted; then, crazed into unreasoning activity, she seized it and strove to stir it into action. As the dead weight resisted her efforts, an agonized cry of *Jack!* penetrated the long halls and died quiveringly upon the air as she sank into unconsciousness.

Mr. Dunburn's face was tense and white. Philip's still expressed a vague outreaching for an illusive truth.

Tom had been sent for and, with the permission of the coroner, entered the death chamber.

An intense look of mystification clouded his eyes as he looked at the corpse.

"It is Jack Jenkins!" he said, his voice hushed before the tragedy confronting him.

"The man I saw,"—Agnes' voice was equally hushed but thoroughly assured, "was Richard Brentford."

"Let us see if his pockets give up any secrets," said the coroner.

In a moment a few papers lay in his hands. He unfolded one of them.

"'I, Luella Herschal, being of sound and disposing mind,'" he read,—"*And here is another one—a copy—no, not a copy—*" He picked up some slips of paper—"*Some one has been practising reproducing the signature—is it possible that we have a forgery case in our hands?*"

"Let me look at the papers," said Tom. "Agnes, the matters of your Aunt Luella's will and the one eye in the two wells are explained. This will, leaving the property to him, is a forgery by his own hand! The property is yours, as she promised."

"The man I saw last night was Richard Brentford," insisted Agnes.

Mr. Dunburn's strong jaw quivered; then he spoke.

"Gentlemen, I recognize in this man Richard Brentford, senior, the husband of my sister who died years ago, and the father of the Richard Brentford who lies ill at your house, Mr. Herman. He was reported killed in a wreck on the S. and L. railroad years ago. I am sure I have made no mistake."

While he was speaking, light was growing in Philip's mind and reflecting in his eyes.

"I see in him, too, the manager of my father's estate,—the man who—upon his death—absconded with large funds and left us penniless."

Light also was growing in Agnes' mind, as she added her testimony to the chain that was winding

about the man whom death was not protecting but revealing.

"When I spoke to him yesterday, in a way I sometimes have of seeing, as already consummated, events 'that cast shadows before,' he believed himself discovered. He shaved his vandyke, preparatory to escape, and tried to reach Grace by way of the fire staircase, to evade those who might see him had he entered by the office door. Without his beard, he and his son look exactly alike. The arc-light defeated his purpose—and he is—here!"

She ceased speaking. There was silence.

"I know," said Philip's mother as they entered the Herman house, "it is Richard Brentford's father and your father's manager. I recognized the likeness as the son lay unconscious. Other incidents have verified the relationship."

With fierce intensity, and wholly shaken out of the stuporous lethargy of preceding weeks, Dick Brentford had lain awaiting the return of his uncle from the errand on which he had been called. Hearing voices, he called loudly,

"Come up here, thief, scoundrel, and give me my father's money."

Appealingly, Mr. Dunburn looked at Dr. Bascombe.

"I have kept this from him all his life! What shall I do! It will kill him to know!"

"It will craze him not to know! He is inoculated with hatred. Tell him every detail and see if it will not prove the antidote. Compelling faith may save his reason. Dick," he turned to the bed, "your uncle is going to talk with you. I ask you to listen quietly."

Simply the uncle told of the day when Richard Brentford, the elder, had taken advantage of his reported death to escape conviction for crime; how he had left mother and baby boy absolutely penniless and

unprovided for; how he—the uncle—had assumed the responsibility and, though with meagre salary, had lavished love and luxury upon the two he loved, himself giving up the dream and love of a lifetime because he could not support a wife and this sister and nephew thrown upon his mercies; how the mother had died and the nephew had viewed him with a virulent hatred he would not attempt to explain away because it would necessitate confession to the son of the father's ill-doing. How now, circumstance had proven stronger than his love and not only the son, but the world must know the dead man as he really was.

"A lifetime of venom visited on such a man," gasped Brentford. Tears welled up where the white heat of passion had burned, and cooled the crazed brain that had been hate-sick for many years.

He put out his hand like a little child, groping for his uncle's.

"Charity! The world is full of it, but because I had none in me, I could not recognize it anywhere. The very breath I draw, I owe to it. The blood still flows in my veins because of it. Let me die! Bury me with my father—a worthy pair in a single grave."

"Love makes men to live and not to die, and Dick, I love you."

Alexander Steny had come in for his daily moment of loving and heard Mr. Dunburn's words. His violin, mended by his own exertions, was in his hand.

"Mr. Dick is getting well, Mr. Tom," he whispered happily, his own face refined to the texture befitting a living soul. "*I know*, for I've sounded love about him. The violin-maker keeps saying that love shapes you into music that you sing into your life, and music holds you together in God. He explains it to me by sounding notes and gets beautiful shapes of flowers and things and that helps me to understand how God holds my

life together and how I can sound the right notes and make a song of what I do, instead of a jumble of noises. Mr. Tom," he looked confidently into his big friend's face as the two left the house together and he trudged along beside Tom on the slippery road, happily hugging his violin, "I'd never have known, without the awful fright of thinking I had killed Dr. Brentford, and what I've learned to know, through helping to love him back, what loving means. Why, Mr. Tom, I'd have been *split to pieces* if it hadn't been for you and Dr. Wehr and the rest, loving me into holding together and living."

Tom left Hi-Timmy at the turn of the road to go back to the hotel where Agnes still remained with Grace. She had refused to go to the Landells' and had fallen into a heavy slumber.

The brother and sister went into the chamber where the body lay.

As they stood there, Agnes' face gave strong reply to some unseen demand upon her.

"No, Jack Jenkins," she said with kindly decision, "You must cease calling upon mine or any other organism than your own, for the perpetration of your actions. Construct and use your own embodiment for what you will to do."

Tom watched his sister, their minds, as never before, coming together in the only real meeting place, the presence of the Most High. Agnes felt peace and knowledge; but she did not speak. She looked at the keen intellectual face of her brother. It was transfigured with a quality never before apparent. A soft white light glowed between them.

"What is it?" she whispered finally, knowing the answer before he spoke.

Tom raised his head. Spiritual insight lay in the manger of his eyes.

“The heavens are opening to me.” The deepening sense of his perception sounded through his tones. “In Conscious Reality, I am seeing the unseen. I find pure souls, Alicia and the others, leading him, who would obsess you, away from you to his own place, there to learn the lesson of the individual.”

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Events pass; but the quality of joy is in you and remains with you.

ALL this beautiful morning, Agnes had been busy with her manuscript, formulating for her heroine, Sophia, the revelation that was coming to her—her soul's conviction of the fulfilling of the law.

The next afternoon, with a sense of breadth she never before had experienced, she went for a long walk. In her was no quality of struggle. Within her sang the thought, "As soon as striving ceases, the fruition of trust begins."

Meanwhile, Mattee Sue was in excited conclave with Tom.

"This is all tush and Biffy Bimkins," she was saying in her prettily emphatic way, "I saw Agnes go down the street just now, as if she were Simon Stylites."

"He sat on a post, according to my recollection. Agnes was walking. Trace the resemblance for me,—that's right, say W-oh-w-er-y, or whatever it is you say—it is never exactly the same twice. The girls North fill in the pauses with an oh-er—all the dif, in softly insinuating, fascinating witchery, between the first automobile and a Nineteen Eighteen model."

"None of you seem to have the *slightest* idea how to tow a man within ten leagues of her, and she is as stationary as the rest of you. Every time Mr. Mevin says he is coming out here, you take it for granted he wants to talk about your abnormal children instead of

seeing that blessed sister of yours. You always say you will go up there! If he says he can come here better, you say you will be running through New York and save him the trouble. I never *saw* such stupid self-centredness! Don't you know he is dying to get down here and finds it difficult after so long a time to rush here *just so*—and you keep choking him off!”

“Jupiter!” said Tom, astounded. “Is that the way you play us! It didn't need any one to tow me to you. When I got good and ready, I just went!”

Mattee Sue pulled his necktie into place with a fascinatingly mock-serious air.

“Is that possible! Did you ever hear of the flounder and how it is born with eyes on each side of its head, w're eyes are supposed to be, and how, when half grown, the eye near the bottom follows the light, until, when it becomes an old lady or gentleman,—one,—it has two eyes on the top w're they are needed? It is to be hoped your second eye will be on top after a while.”

“What do you mean, impudence!”

“You came w'en you were good and ready, did you! Never thought, I suppose, that but for Agnes' love for you, and blessed Tommy Tompkins, 'who sat right beside me,' we might still have been discussing bones and colored charts on paper! Not *towed*! My precious lamb! Most of you men are towed, and the smartest tower is the one who best conceals the towline and makes lammie think he has trotted w're he pleases. I may mix my animals—sometimes it is a mule on the end of the towline—but I did not wish to sound personal!”

“Why don't you sound your medial H's instead?” retaliated Tom, much amused and somewhat enlightened.

“To feed Yankee curiosity,” she returned spicily.

"Can one ever get ahead of you?" sighed Tom. "I don't recall that the rest of your family drop them—oh, yes, your father."

"It gives me more time and strength to push on Agnes' love affairs. It takes a *great* deal of strength to blow out a big w'istle of breath in the middle of a word. I couldn't say half so much if I stopped to smile and bow at every H I met. We all need lots of help, don't we, sweetheart! Think w'at-oooh what!—wouldn't have become of us, but for the weird ways of Genung's Rhetoric!"

Tom laughed, hugged his rhetoric queen, and went whistling down the road. In a short time, Mattee Sue stole from the room and slyly dropped a letter into the mail box at the gate, returning with the expression of a victorious cupid.

Meanwhile, Agnes had reached the pine-fringed avenue leading to the hotel. She swung easily up the steep ascent, singing in her heart.

"I have faith that in the beginning,
When life was given us all,
It was planned that sooner or later,
Our hearts should answer the call,
That prescient voice of the spirit,
That, spite of sea or zone,
Sometime, across the silence,
Gives to us, each, our own."

She lingered to peel a bit of black birch from the tree that had stood there since she was a little girl. Everything filled her with sweet refreshment as she felt as never before that things were being done for her and there flowed "through her restlessness, His rest."

Clouds were piling up, black and ragged, and the sun was setting the edges of the masses aflame with light.

As she watched the scene, there flashed from one of the darkest clouds a cross of lightning. It poised, for an instant, then disappeared.

Her face was radiant as she absorbed the beauty.

"Never, anywhere, have I beheld such cloud effects as about this little New England lake. That cross of St. Constantine's is a rare sight, I am told—as rare, perhaps, as is the translation of its message to the human heart. Self-sacrifice," she mused, "in the sense of breaking our integrity on the cross-breedings of ignorance; crucifixion, in the sense of nailing ourselves with the beliefs of sex-intelligence, or of emotive feelings of low order, because those about us may comprehend no other kind; the nails of sentimentalism, race and ancestor worship, tradition—I am beginning to see that self-sacrifice is not this. It is holy doing. I am learning to see through the medium of manifested things, not to rest in it."

Sweet-toned and perfectly-tuned chimes rang out from the tower of a church near-by. Her heart responded to the call. Walking down the street, she entered the building.

The cool, deep recesses stirred her strangely. The afternoon sun caused shadows of the waving ivy to move in delicate tracery upon the walls and floor. The air wafted in the sweetness of flowers and the singing of birds. Not more than twenty were present. She felt alone, and, bowing her head,

"I thank Thee for thy gift of Wisdom, dear God," she whispered.

She raised her head.

The deep tones of the organ were wakened by a tender hand. The strains of the processional sounded in the distant precincts; the surpliced choristers swept up the aisle in swaying waves of black and white.

The music ceased. The service proceeded. Yet no

message other than of abstract good had come to her. Within her heart she registered a vow.

"Like Jacob I will wrestle with Thee, Oh God. I will not let Thee go! In the first words read I shall find my guidance!"

The rector stepped into the desk. Over Agnes' heart came a deep calm. Through the silence, mingling its music with the songs of birds, the whispering of leaves, and the changing shadows of the waning Sunday afternoon, his voice came to her attentive, willing heart, clear, definite and strong,—

"For marriage is honorable unto the Lord."

A feeling of astoundment swept through her—a question as to how to reach the fulfilment she had declared.

"Go on in steady assurance," sounded through her being, "'Make this forenoon sublime, this afternoon a psalm, this night a prayer.'"

The sunset grew intensely red. The atmosphere changed. Evening had come on. The peace grew upon her. Contending voices ceased. She heard no argument, no answer, no phenomenon, no symbol. She *knew* she was in Light.

"—And give you peace, Amen,"—closed the benediction, and Agnes passed into the crimson-heralded night with the new moon set as a beacon in the sky.

CHAPTER XL.

*"I saw God in His Glory passing near me,
And bowed my head in worship."*

ROSS MEVIN sat in his study, his eyes on the clouds, his heart on Agnes. Never had he attempted or even desired to hasten the unfolding of her love. He knew that when it blossomed, as he always had been sure it would, it would be a flower of eternal blooming. He had felt it opening toward the sun of his desire, and to-day was internally assured there was no longer need for waiting. Constantly, during these past days, he had felt the support of her inspiration accompanying his executive toward accomplishment. Already they had become one in ideals, one in appreciation, one in faith, and one in understanding. No longer should she deny him the right of wooing or herself of being wooed. Love is an abstract quality in the hurtling world; but it is no abstract thing between one man and one woman! It is life! It lives anew in every pressure of the hand, every kiss upon rose-leaf lips, the touch of an escaping lock of hair! He and she had found the same tongue. They could commune in soul!

A figure formed in the fleecy clouds. He dreamed that it was Agnes, standing waiting, poised against the blue. Another bit of fleece detached from the mass of cloud and joined the first. In his happy reverie he saw this as himself, and together they floated away in the path of the sun, across the blue, into the sweet spring night, with the new moon set as a beacon in the sky.

On the wings of twilight, a special delivery letter was brought to his door. He opened it in the violet gloaming and read,

"My dear Mr. Mevin,—I am becoming secretary, for the moment, for Mr. Landell. A personal conference will be *so very* much more satisfactory than letters, and as plans include me, would it be *very much* trouble for you to come to us at your convenience, to-morrow?"

MATTIE SUE LANDELL.

An instant, and his hand was on the receiver of the telephone.

"Will you send a telegram to this address," he called,—“I shall reach Beneby by the twelve M. train. Ross Mevin.”

"I declare, Agnes," said Mattee Sue, late the next forenoon, with an excited little tremor in her voice, "I didn't give the dressmaker any sample for my velvet. Would you be *such a dear* as to drive to the station with it? She goes to town on the twelve train—the one that comes down from Worcester at that time. I would thank you *so very, very* much. The trap and Jetty are right there at the door, I see, and you can just catch the train, if you hurry."

Agnes acquiesced. Patting her favorite horse, to which she clung affectionately, despite the fascinations of motor-cars, she drove away, while Mattee Sue squeezed a tear from her eyes and turned and hugged Tom, who, just then, came up the steps.

"Oh, Tom," she whispered, cuddling close to him, "I prayed so hard, and so long, that I nearly let her lose the train after all!"

"What are you talking about, you wonderful little wood-thrush singing sweetness into everybody's life?" and Tom hugged her three times in response to her once.

"I never meant to tell! Wait, just a very few minutes and you will *see!*"

So it was that Agnes met Mevin at the station. He came toward her and took his seat beside her.

Agnes gave a sign to the fleet horse that sent her trotting down the road. Plainly pulsing through the rein, Jetty could feel the joy of her mistress' heart, as she realized that the love she had persistently ignored was near her, breathing its holy ecstasy upon her. The assurance of the love she had repelled came to her now in the light of a benison—an untwining of meshes she had feared, a leading out of mazes in which she had been losing her way—out into the open of the liberty of God.

Every turn of the carriage wheels brought to her, as an undercurrent of accompaniment,

"That prescient voice of the spirit,
That, spite of sea or zone,
Sometime, across the silence,
Brings to us, each, our own."

The speed of their going was not conducive to speech, and neither wished to interrupt, by words, the singing in their hearts.

Agnes' spirit radiated till the aura of her joy was as tangible as that of a rose petal freshly unfolded from the heart of the mother rose. Her atmosphere was that belonging only to those who recognize in their every moment, in the visible sense world, the invisible life of the larger real—whose power is supremacy of the soul. Her eyes sparkled. The glow of health, having come, daily, more permanently and actually into her cheeks, flushed her clear skin. The poise of her body was balanced before the great glad truth that the liberty of God, as well as through silence and

solitude, comes through human loves and companionships, and, through the inherent right of individual choice and selection, brings to each his own.

Mevin, too, his soul with hers, saw the sparkle of the eye, the freshness of the exquisite skin, the touch of the virile hand upon the reins; realized the growing health and balance of this woman beside him; recognized the beauty of the temple as he recognized the supremacy of the soul that interpenetrated it, and faced this supreme moment of his life, not with the hysterical adoration of sense feeling the world so often knows as all there is of love, and which, a while ago, would have been his own limited conception. At this moment of his initiation, there was with him a deep rest, serenity, and power. It was as if the desires of his senses, far from being repressed or killed, had unfolded into something so infinitely more wonderful that he felt as if he had entered upon a world of potent probabilities in which her soul was winging her way with his in the accomplishment of something ineffable and never-ending.

Agnes did not drive to the main entrance of the house, but turned, instead, into what was called the lower road—an avenue some mile and a half in length, reaching the house through the park drive that homed great hemlocks by the hundreds with here and there a colony of beeches.

Until then, there had been no sound save the click, click, of Jetty's feet upon the roadway, and the throb, throb, of the spirit of life in all about.

As she turned in at the entrance, the steady impact of the little steel-shod hoofs changed the quality of their rhythmic sound, and fell hushed upon the fir needles.

The great woods had the attitude of listening; the world was full of the stillness that pervades when

nature poises, awaiting the coming of some great event.

Then, Agnes released her touch upon the rein and looked at Mevin. There was no coyness, no flickering of the lash. It was the straight look where soul meets soul.

"Out of the loneliness and waiting I have come into the companionship of your love, Agnes, my own," he whispered, and clasped her in his arms.

THE END

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